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Women in development

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 66/216 on women in development, the present report focuses on decent work, unpaid care work and social protection. It emphasizes that decent work, support to unpaid care work and social protection are crucial for the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment and for inclusive, equitable and sustainable growth and development. Assuming particular significance in the context of the global financial and economic crisis, decent work, support to unpaid care work and social protection have important multiplier effects across a spectrum of development goals, including poverty reduction and improved child well-being. Recommendations are provided for consideration by the Assembly.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 66/216 on women in development, the General Assembly recognized the links between gender equality, poverty eradication and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The Assembly also reaffirmed women's significant contributions to the economy and to combating poverty and inequalities through remunerated and unremunerated work at home, in the community and workplace, reiterating that women's empowerment is critical to eradicate poverty.

2. The General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the implementation of resolution 66/216 at its sixty-eighth session, including on integrating a gender perspective into national development strategies. In the present report, particular emphasis was placed on the issues of decent work, unpaid care work and social protection for women, especially given the ongoing financial and economic crisis. Based on inputs received from Member States and the United Nations system,[1] the present report reviews measures taken by Governments and support provided by the United Nations system to address these issues. It concludes with recommendations for consideration by the Assembly.

II. Background

3. The normative framework for women's economic empowerment, decent work and social protection is grounded in a number of human rights declarations, conventions and resolutions. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women provides a comprehensive basis for the guarantee of women's full rights to employment, including access to social protection programmes and public services. More recently, the ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202) reaffirmed the importance of social protection in reducing inequalities. Moreover, under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights States have an obligation to take appropriate legislative, administrative, budgetary and other measures to progressively realize economic rights, to use maximum resources to do so and to avoid retrogression. Another milestone was the ILO Domestic Workers' Convention, 2011 (No. 189), which entitles domestic workers to fair conditions of employment and protection from human rights abuses. Further, at the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women, Member States committed to take measures to ensure that all workplaces are free from discrimination, exploitation, violence and sexual harassment and bullying.

4. Reducing economic inequality in order to lessen the risk of economic crisis and enable faster recovery is now on the international policy agenda and much of

[1] Contributions were received from the Governments of: Belgium, Botswana, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Jordan, Ireland, Myanmar, Paraguay, Singapore, Slovenia, Sweden and Turkey. The following United Nations entities provided inputs: the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the World Food Programme (WFP).

the current public policy analysis calls for measures that will promote inclusive growth. Today, leading economists stress that economic inequality, which has been rising rapidly in the pre-crisis years in a number of countries, has been one of the main triggers of the recent economic crisis and is also stalling recovery today.[2] This was also well documented by other scholars,[3] who argued that the 2007-2008 crisis has shown that increasing income inequality is a major structural problem that needs to be addressed in order to accelerate the recovery and prevent future crises.

5. Projections for overall economic growth are raising additional concerns for the future. Projections by IMF[4] and the DESA of the United Nations Secretariat have been revised downward. For instance, the Department forecasts gross domestic product (GDP) growth in 2013 in advanced economies to be 0.7 percentage points lower than was forecast in June 2012, to the now estimated 1.1 per cent. According to the Department, growth is also slowing in emerging and developing countries. The near-term economic outlook is especially gloomy in the Euro zone countries, where in 2012 GDP growth declined by 0.6 per cent, and recent projections suggest a contraction of 0.3 per cent in 2013, instead of an expansion of 0.1 per cent, as previously projected.[5]

6. Today there is consensus that the way forward is "employment-led recovery, underpinned by respect for human rights, including labour rights, and participatory processes through social dialogue".[6] Additionally, within the context of the post-2015 development dialogue, there has been widespread demand for the centrality of decent work and social protection in recovery efforts. This is underpinned and buttressed by United Nations policy efforts to promote "social protection floors" for all across a wide range of countries.

7. However, evidence shows that the global crisis led to deterioration in the quality of employment in a number of countries. An ILO Report[7] analysing advanced economies between 2007 and 2010 showed that the incidence of involuntary temporary employment increased in 80 per cent of the countries analysed, while part-time employment increased in 85 per cent of countries. In emerging and developing countries, the share of informal employment remains high, standing at more than 40 per cent in two thirds of those countries for which data are

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[2] Joseph Stiglitz, "Inequality Is Holding Back the Recovery"; accessed on 3 August 2013 at http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/01/19/inequality-is-holding-back-the-recovery.

[3] José Gabriel Palma, "Homogeneous middles vs. Heterogeneous tails, and the End of the Inverted-U: It's All About the Share of the rich", *Development and Change*, 42(1): pp. 87-153 (The Hague, International Institute of Social Studies, 2011).
Ashwani Saith, "Inequality, Imbalance, Instability: Reflections on a Structural Crisis", *Development and Change*, vol. 42(1), pp. 70-86 (The Hague, International Institute of Social Studies, 2011).

[4] International Monetary Fund, *World Economic Outlook 2013: Hopes, realities, risks* (Washington, D.C., April 2013).
(United Nations publication, Sales No. E.13.II.C.2), *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2013* (New York, United Nations, 2013).

[5] International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Economic Outlook Update: Gradual upturn in global growth during 2013 (Washington, D.C., 2013).

[6] Guy Ryder, "Human rights and the post-2015 agenda: The role of decent work", introductory remarks delivered by the ILO Director General to the Human Rights Council at the high-level panel discussion on human rights mainstreaming (Geneva, 1 March 2013).

[7] ILO, *World of Work Report 2012: Better jobs for a better economy* (Geneva, International Institute for Labour Studies, 2012).

available. Since 2010, involuntary temporary and part-time employment has increased in many countries where employment growth has resumed.

8. The economic crisis also had a gendered impact on the quality of work. Another ILO report shows that "vulnerable employment", comprising work carried out by contributing family workers and own account workers, as opposed to wage and salaried workers, is more widespread for women than for men. In 2012, there was a global gender gap of 2.3 percentage points, with a larger share of women in such vulnerable employment, 50.4 per cent of employed women, compared to men, among whom 48.1 per cent were engaged in such employment, pushing women to seek fragile, temporary types of work, which are generally low-paid and lack benefits.[8]

9. Care is an essential, universal need and supports the engagement of both men and women in paid work. Unpaid care work contributes to individual and household well-being, social development and economic growth, but it often goes unrecognized and undervalued by policymakers, as does the fact that its costs and burdens are unequally born across gender and class. Care is primarily provided by women and girls and has important implications for gender equality. Recent studies[9] have shown that the economic crisis has pushed many women to seek paid employment, partly to complement income loss following a spousal job loss, or in response to a worsening economic situation in the household. However, this increased participation in paid work has not resulted in reduced responsibility for unpaid work.[10] The responsibility for unpaid work is one of the reasons why government austerity programmes that result in cutbacks to social sector expenditures hit women, especially those that are the most economically vulnerable, particularly hard.[11]

10. Following the global financial and economic crisis and in light of high public debt levels, pressure has increased for austerity and fiscal consolidation to a degree that seriously threatens financing for social protection. As noted by several prominent economists,[12] many advanced and middle-income countries have started to dismantle their social protection systems thereby undermining the extent to which social protection measures can act as automatic stabilizers.

11. While most of the debate on the negative effects of austerity measures has focused on Western Europe and North America, part of the untold story remains the adverse implications of these measures for women in these contexts, as well as the wider implications of the crisis for people in low income countries, particularly women, children, and other vulnerable groups. A recent study, which undertook a review of public expenditure and adjustment measures in 181 countries, indicates

[8] See ILO, *Global Employment Trend for Women 2012* (Geneva, International Institute for Labour Studies, 2012).

[9] See Günseli Berik and Ebru Kongar (2013), "Time Allocation of Married Mothers and Fathers in Hard Times: The 2007 Recession", *Feminist Economics*, vol. 19 (3) (April 2013).

[10] See Seçil A. Kaya Bahçe and Emel Memiş (2013), "Estimating the Impact of 2008-2009 Economic Crisis on Work Time in Turkey", *Feminist Economics*, vol. 19 (3) (April 2013), Levy Economics Institute, working paper 686 (Bard College, 2011).

[11] See Sakiko Fukuda-Parr, James Heinz and Stephanie Seguino, "Perspectives on the causes and consequences of the financial crisis: Conversation between heterodox macroeconomics and feminist economics", *Feminist Economics*, vol. 19 (3) (April 2013).

[12] See Joseph Stiglitz, "The global crisis, social protection and jobs", *International Labour Review*, vol. 148 (2009), no. 1-2, pp. 1-13.

that Governments are undertaking various adjustment measures in response to the crisis. Projections from the report show that fiscal contraction will be more severe in the developing world. Overall, 68 developing countries are projected to cut public spending by 3.7 percent of GDP on average between 2013 and 2015 compared to 26 high-income countries, which are expected to contract by 2.2 per cent of GDP, on average.[13]

III. Decent work for women

12. According to ILO, "decent work involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men".

13. In the last two decades, the global rate of female labour force participation has increased from 50 per cent to 52 per cent, and the male rate has dropped from 82 to 78 per cent.[14] However, despite an improvement in female labour force participation rates, women did not benefit from increased access to decent work. Globally, both men and women have had limited access to such work. Most of the job gains following the crisis have been low paying and lacking in benefits. Furthermore, non-enforcement of core labour standards propels a "race to the bottom", which ultimately exacerbates poverty and exclusion.[15] The non-enforcement of these standards can place women at increased risk of violence, harassment and exploitation at work, thereby impeding promotion of "full participation in the formal economy and their equal access to full employment and decent work".[16]

14. The current global outlook for employment remains bleak, despite policy efforts in advanced and middle income countries to stimulate aggregate demand, and provide liquidity to the banking system. In the aftermath of the 2007-2008 crisis, obtaining employment has become very difficult. The crisis has worsened gender gaps in unemployment across all regions. The gender gap in employment increased from 0.5 percentage points in 2007 to 0.7 percentage points in 2012, eliminating 13 million jobs for women, a trend expected to persist until 2017.[16] Initially, male-dominated sectors — finance, construction, transport and manufacturing — were most affected, but as the global downturn intensified, the crisis appears to have worsened gender differentials in unemployment across all regions, especially as public sector employment, in many countries a female-dominated sector, came under pressure.

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[13] See Matthew Cummins and Isabel Ortiz, *The age of austerity: A review of public expenditures and adjustment measures in 181 countries*, Initiative for Policy Dialogue and the South Centre Working Paper (Geneva, 2013).

[14] International Labour Organization, *Global Employment Trends 2013: Recovering from a second jobs dip* (Geneva, 2013).

[15] See International Labour Organization, *Global employment trends for women* (Geneva, March 2009).

[16] "Agreed conclusions on the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls"; available from www.un.org/womenwatch/daw.

15. Young women and men have been particularly affected. According to an ILO report,[14] the global youth unemployment rate, estimated at 12.6 per cent in 2013, translates into 73 million unemployed young people. With shrinking opportunities for young people who are entering the labour market for the first time, informal employment has become pervasive and transitions to decent work are slow and difficult.

16. Recent evidence from 43 countries on gender-based wage differentials in 15 sectors, from construction to domestic work, shows that women earn 18 per cent, on average, less than their male counterparts.[17] Gender wage gaps reflect disadvantages in education; bargaining power; labour market mobility and flexibility; a high degree of involvement in part-time, temporary and low-income jobs; and direct discrimination.

17. Employing domestic workers is a growing global trend for families seeking to reconcile household responsibilities with employment demands. The ILO estimates that there are between 53 million and 100 million domestic workers worldwide, of which 83 per cent are women.[18] However, labour laws in many countries do not cover domestic work and its hidden nature makes it more difficult to enforce legislation where it exists.[18] The ILO Convention on Domestic Workers is a step in the right direction, although concrete outcomes for workers will depend on legislative changes at the national level, and effective follow-up by autonomous organizing on the part of domestic workers themselves and alliances with other rights-based organizations, including trade unions and women's rights organizations.

18. Certain groups of women face additional constraints in the labour market as a result of their geographical location and/or intersectional forms of discrimination, including on the grounds of race, ethnicity and nationality. Within paid domestic work, for example, more marginalized groups of women tend to dominate. In addition, women who are smallholder farmers in rural areas have been adversely affected by decades of underinvestment in agriculture, lack of secure access to land, and recent volatilities in food and commodity prices and export-driven agricultural enterprises that have offered seasonal and casual work often under adverse working conditions.

19. Economic pressures have also pushed many women to migrate to find work, sometimes leaving their own children behind in order to take care of other children and the elderly in richer countries. Women — both high-skilled and "unskilled" — constitute an increasing proportion of cross-border labour flows. Such strategies in response to economic distress have become more common with the increasing frequency of financial and economic crises in recent decades.[19]

20. Women migrants face particular obstacles in accessing social protection and services, reliable information on safe and legal migration, low-cost remittance transfer mechanisms and savings and investment schemes. They are vulnerable to

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[17] Kea G. Tijdens and Maarten van Klaveren, "Frozen in time: Gender pay gap unchanged for 10 years" (Brussels, International Trade Union Confederation, 2012).

[18] International Labour Organization, "Global and regional estimates on domestic workers", policy brief no. 4 (Geneva, International Labour Office, 2011).

[19] Nicola Piper, "International migration and gendered axes of stratification (Introduction)", Nicola Piper, ed., *New Perspectives on Gender and Migration: Livelihood, Rights and Entitlements* (New York and Abingdon/Oxon, UNRISD/Routledge, 2007).

discrimination and violence at every stage of migration by employment agencies, employers and public officials.[20]

IV. Measures taken by Member States and support by United Nations agencies to address women's decent work

21. In support of national priorities, Member States have carried out a range of policy and programmatic interventions to promote women's decent work. Chile, El Salvador, Jordan, Slovenia and Sweden have mainstreamed gender equality into public policies and institutional processes, including labour policies. Similarly, Ireland has used its national women's strategy to develop gender sensitive provisions. Colombia, El Salvador, Jordan, Singapore, Slovenia and Turkey are implementing policies and legislation to eliminate gender-based workplace discrimination.

22. Chile provides subsidies to promote women's entry into the labour market, while Sweden provides income tax credits that make women's work more attractive. Jordan, Myanmar and Turkey provide vocational training, skills upgrading and on-the-job training; and established specialized profession acquirement centres. Singapore implements programmes to encourage employers to adopt flexible work arrangements, job redesign, support the employment of mature workers, and establish Smart Work Centres nationwide to enhance women's workforce participation.

23. Some Member States implemented measures to monitor and reduce gender wage gaps, such as Colombia, which awarded a Gender Equity Seal for entities achieving gender wage parity. Colombia, Singapore and Turkey reported awareness-raising on workers' employment rights and employers' legal obligations.

24. Some countries have provided labour law coverage and employment-related social protection to informal sector workers. Jordan and Singapore covered foreign domestic workers in their labour laws. Other countries have instituted social protection measures, including social security provisions for informal sector workers (El Salvador); supplements to pension contributions of older low-wage workers (Singapore); subsidies to insurance premiums paid by part-time female workers; and income tax exemptions on women's sale of self-produced goods at fairs and festivals (Turkey).

25. ILO, with UN-Women and the United Nations Global Compact, is promoting the Multinational Enterprises Declaration, including non-discrimination principles, and provides technical assistance to companies on fundamental rights and principles at work.

26. United Nations agencies have supported job creation, placement and skills training for women, often in partnership with Governments and civil society. These include food or cash for assets and training programmes in largely rural food insecure contexts; public works programmes in rural Egypt (UNDP); and facilitating private job placement service and training in the West Bank (UNRWA).

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[20] International Labour Organization, *Gender Equality at the Heart of Decent Work*, International Labour Conference, ninety-eighth session, Report VI (Geneva, International Labour Office, 2009).

27. UNIDO supported women's small-scale production of olive oil, textiles, dried fruits and vegetables in northern Morocco. UNDP provided training to women in Kyrgyzstan to produce building insulation materials and supported the Government of Lebanon to establish International Organization for Standardization-certified women-owned and operated cooperatives for food processing and packaging. UNIDO and UNDP have focused on resource-efficient and cleaner production and renewable energy to promote cleaner, non-hazardous working conditions and enhance women's productivity.

28. UNRWA provides income-generating opportunities for Palestinian refugees, as well as other poor or marginal groups, extending credit and complementary financial services to small-business owners, micro-entrepreneurs and households.

29. The Fund for Gender Equality grants supported over 163,741 women to secure decent work, over 114,433 women to gain skills and resources, and over 4 million women to gain protection and security for themselves and their families. Additionally, together with the United Nations Capital Development Fund, UN-Women supports Mozambique, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone and the United Republic of Tanzania in improving women's access to resources and services at the local level through gender responsive planning, programming and budgeting to better respond to women's priorities. In the United Republic of Tanzania, the programme has contributed to women improving their agricultural skills and knowledge of agri-business. As a result, they improved the quality of their processed food and generated more demand for products at a higher price.

30. UNDP expanded women's access to productive assets and financial services through the establishment of funds and micro-finance schemes and by promoting women's entrepreneurship in Bahrain, Egypt, Kuwait, Lebanon, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen. In Egypt, UNDP is supporting the implementation of innovative public works programmes in rural areas, with a focus on women and youth, to support employment in these areas.

31. A number of countries have reported efforts aimed at providing financing for women's economic empowerment. Botswana disburses grants to women's groups and non-governmental organizations for income-generating projects that promote women's employment outside of the home, their rights to own property and their participation in decision-making outside the home. Chile, Myanmar, Paraguay and Turkey have facilitated women's entrepreneurship and business development through subsidies and other forms of financial support to women's small enterprises and training.

32. Ireland, Slovenia and Sweden have ongoing efforts to finance gender equality initiatives within the framework of overseas development assistance. For instance, a large focus of Sweden's international development cooperation is on women's economic empowerment, skills-building, social protection and working conditions. Sweden supports related initiatives in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia and Mozambique. Sweden also provides financial support to the global network Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing, which works to improve the status of women in the informal economy, and to Women's World Banking, an organization that aims to sustain and improve micro-finance for women.

33. Governments also reported using data collection systems to register, monitor and evaluate cases of labour violations, sexual harassment and other obstacles to women's labour rights. Belgium commissioned a study on obstacles in the labour field related to pregnancy and maternity. Results of the survey were used to inform a series of recommendations for improvements targeted to workers, employers and human resource managers. Jordan developed a database on wage discrimination to enable decision-makers to formulate evidence-based policies that can enhance pay equity, raise awareness and propose legislation in support of wage equality.

34. UNIDO worked to increase the proportion of women with decent work and opportunities to participate in trade-related activities collecting sex-disaggregated baseline data, developing gender-sensitive indicators and promoting women's participation in decision-making. The United Nations Statistics Division also formally endorsed a minimum set of 52 gender indicators in February 2013, which were produced by the Interagency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics. This minimum set includes indicators on participation in productive activities.

V. Addressing women's unpaid care work

35. "Unpaid work" encompasses all forms of unremunerated work activities and plays an important role in improving welfare in the household and the economy as a whole.[21] Unpaid care work is the care of persons for no explicit monetary reward with the majority of this work done within households. Unpaid care work can also be performed across households in communities and within institutions.[22] While this work is unpaid, its contributions constitute meaningful work with both time and energy costs.[23]

36. The provision of unpaid care underpins the ability of both men and women to engage in paid work. It is essential to the functioning of the economy, but often goes undercounted and unrecognized as labour markets fail to acknowledge its contributions.[24] It is not included in labour force surveys or in GDP figures and, as a result, the realities of unpaid care work burdens are not visible in the data that inform policymaking and programmatic interventions. In order to increase the recognition of this work, quantitative and qualitative data are needed to clearly show its scope and how it is distributed within families and communities.

37. Women and girls continue to carry an unequal level of responsibility for unpaid care work despite their increased participation in paid work. Studies[21] using time-use data in various high-, middle- and low-income countries have shown that unpaid work is not evenly distributed between men and women, with women performing between two and five hours more in unpaid work than men. Research[25]

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[21] Rania Antonopoulos, "The Unpaid Care Work — Paid Work Connection", Working Paper No. 541 (Annandale-on-Hudson, Levy Economics Institute, 2008).

[22] Shahra Razavi, "The Political and Social Economy of Care in a Development Context", Gender and Development Programme Paper Number 3 (Geneva, UNRISD, 2007).

[23] Deborah Budlender, "Why should we care about unpaid work?" (New York, United Nations Development Fund for Women, 2004).

[24] Diane Elson, "Labor markets as gendered institutions: Equality, efficiency and empowerment issues", *World Development*, vol. 27, No. 3, pp. 611-627 (1999).

[25] United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, "Combating Poverty and Inequality: Structural Change, Social Policy and Politics" (Geneva, UNRISD, 2010); anglophone countries

conducted in a number of anglophone, developing, Central European, Eastern European, Nordic and southern European countries shows a similar trend, but with variations among countries. Women's time spent on unpaid care is higher than men everywhere, but the reverse is true for paid work. However, the gender gap is much more acute in developing countries, where the mean time spent by women on unpaid care work is more than twice the mean time spent by men. When paid and unpaid work are combined, women in developing countries allocate more time to work than men, with less time for education, leisure, political participation and self-care.

38. The recession and subsequent jobless recovery have widened the workload and leisure-hours gap between mothers and fathers in some countries, with mothers substituting paid work for unpaid work while fathers do not take on more unpaid work as a result of reduced hours of paid work.[9] Additionally, reductions in public expenditures on essential services and the introduction of user fees in the education, health, water and sanitation sectors have driven poor families to depend even more on women and girls' unpaid labour with serious implications for their health and well-being.[26]

39. An important first step is the recognition of unpaid care work through time-use surveys that measure such work and make it possible for economic models that inform policymaking to take account of it. Equally important, some forms of unpaid work that involve drudgery need to be reduced. Reducing time and energy spent in activities such as fetching water and washing clothes through investments in infrastructure and time-saving domestic technology frees up women's time for income-generating work, education and training, political and community activities and leisure and self-care. Moreover, investment in quality, accessible care services for children and others needing care, gender-responsive work-family reconciliation policies and cultural change can help redistribute unpaid care work between women and men within families, and between families and the public sector.[27]

VI. Measures taken by Member States and support by United Nations agencies to recognize, reduce and redistribute women's unpaid care work

40. Increased responsibility by the State for the provision of public services, coupled with appropriate incentives and support to households, can help promote more equitable distribution of unpaid care work within families, and between households and the State. In high-income countries, affordable, accessible, high-quality care services, with hours harmonized with the working day, have improved work-family balance; increased parents' labour force participation, continuity and

(Canada, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America), developing countries (Argentina, India, Nicaragua, South Africa and the United Republic of Tanzania), Central European countries (Belgium, France and Germany), Eastern European countries (Hungary, Poland and Slovenia), Nordic countries (Finland, Norway and Sweden), and southern European countries (Italy, Spain and Portugal).

[26] Shahra Razavi, "The return to social policy and the persistent neglect of unpaid care", *Development and Change*, vol. 38, No. 3, pp. 377-400 (2007).

[27] Diane Elson, "The Three R's of Unpaid Work: Recognition, Reduction and Redistribution", submitted to the expert group meeting on unpaid work, economic development and human well-being, United Nations Development Programme (New York, 2008).

productivity; and have reduced absenteeism. In developing countries, childcare services have also increased labour force participation. However, care services for very young children are typically unavailable, expensive or limited in coverage.[15]

41. Some States have developed policies and legislation that provide for maternity, paternity and parental leave (Chile, Singapore, Slovenia and Sweden) and elaborated provisions to ensure that parental leave is shared, as a way of promoting shared care responsibilities between men and women and improving work-life balance. This includes a gender equality bonus to encourage parents to share parental leave equally (Sweden), and the non-transferable right to paternity leave for up to 90 days (Slovenia). An inter-agency[28] Maternity Resource Protection Package serves as a policy support and capacity strengthening tool for Governments and other partners. ILO has engaged with tripartite constituents to promote work-life balance initiatives in Brazil, Cambodia, Chile, China and the Republic of Moldova.

42. Several States noted that they support non-parental care through direct service provision such as early childhood education and care through nurseries and kindergartens (Jordan); nurseries in companies employing 20 or more workers (Chile); granting subsidies to care providers or income allowances that match parental contributions to make childcare services more affordable (Singapore); establishing national systems of care provision and harmonizing business hours with childcare and school hours (El Salvador). Mexico's programme Estancias Infantiles para Apoyar a Mujeres Trabajadores, which provides childcare subsidies for low-income working mothers, was designed explicitly to reduce the burden of unpaid care work and encourage women's economic activity.[29]

43. Argentina, Chile, Mexico, South Africa and Uruguay have implemented policies to address the issue of care work, including the provision of care services and early childhood education. Countries such as China and India are providing paid domestic/care services, performed in some cases by non-profit organizations or individuals employed by the State. However, in most cases, those performing care work do not enjoy the same leave entitlements or social security benefits as State employees. An exception is Sweden, where care services are financed by the State and performed by State employees, with full rights and entitlements.

44. To reduce women's and girls' time spent on firewood collection and the associated risk of violence, in 2009, WFP, in partnership with the Women's Refugee Commission, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and the United Nations Environmental Programme, introduced the Safe Access to Firewood and Alternative Energy in Humanitarian Settings (SAFE) stoves initiative. In 2012, the initiative had reached more than 2 million people.

45. Some States have also taken measures to recognize and value women's unpaid care work, including by regularly conducting time-use surveys to highlight and measure women's and men's unpaid work (El Salvador and Sweden); the inclusion of care work in the System of National Accounts to measure women's contributions to social and economic development; and the redefinition of unpaid work

[28] ILO, WHO, UNICEF, UN-Women, UNFPA, International Baby Food Action Network.

[29] Paola Pereznieto and Mariana Campos, "Gendered risks, poverty and vulnerability in Mexico: Contributions of the Estancias Infantiles para Apoyar a Madres Trabajadores programme" (London, Overseas Development Institute, 2010).

(Colombia). These studies, along with the preparation of household satellite accounts, are particularly useful for calculating, recognizing and making visible the contributions of women's care work to the economic and social development of the country.

46. UNDP has supported a number of Governments in their efforts to implement time-use surveys. Its Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean supported the Levy Economics Institute of Bard College to develop an innovative index to link income and time poverty in the new Levy Institute Measure of Time and Income Poverty.

47. The United Nations Statistics Division is working to support the efforts of Member States to implement time-use surveys with the trial International Classification of Activities for Time Use Statistics. This international classification is intended to provide the structure of a classification that could be adapted to national circumstances and better facilitate international comparisons.

48. UN-Women also provides support to Member States to conduct time-use surveys. With support from UN-Women, Algeria and Morocco designed and conducted national time-use surveys during the period of 2011-2012.[30]

VII. Social protection for women

49. Social protection is concerned with preventing, managing and overcoming situations that adversely affect people's well-being or living standards. It includes contingencies such as illness, disability, maternity and old age; market-risks such as unemployment and price volatilities that adversely affect the incomes of farmers or self-employed workers; and economic crises and natural disasters.[31] According to ILO, 80 per cent of the world population lacks social protection.[32] While it is recognized that social protection is a key policy response for addressing poverty, affordability, costing and financing social protection efforts remain challenging.

50. Social protection instruments encompass social insurance and social assistance programmes. Social insurance programmes are typically accessed through formal employment, as in the case of contributory social insurance programmes for health, old age and maternity, or alternatively through company-based health plans. These types of programmes can also include "dependents" under their coverage. In some countries Governments have taken steps to adapt their social protection systems to transformations in the labour markets, bringing those who are informally employed or self-employed under the coverage of health insurance programmes by making affiliation mandatory and by partially subsidizing their contributions.[33]

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[30] Ministry of Finance, National Statistical Office, National Time Use Survey Algeria 2012, Dissemination workshop of preliminary results, Institut National de Santé Publique, Algiers, 30 June 2013.

[31] See United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, "Combating Poverty and Inequality: Structural Change, Social Policy and Politics" (Geneva, UNRISD, 2010).

[32] International Labour Organization, "Social Protection Floor for a Fair and Inclusive Globalization" (Geneva, 2011).

[33] Carmelo Mesa-Lago, *Social Insurance (Pensions and Health), Labour Markets and Coverage in Latin America*, Social Policy and Development Programme Paper No. 36 (Geneva, UNRISD, 2010); Huck-Ju Kwon and Byonghu Tchoe, "The political economy of national health insurance

51. Social assistance programmes provide "non-contributory" benefits, usually to those falling below a certain level of income and/or meeting some other criteria of vulnerability. Because they do not rely on formal labour relationships and previous contributions, social assistance programmes are especially important for low-income countries with large informal sectors.[31] These programmes have moved to centre-stage in recent years, in the context of global concerns about poverty.

52. Both instruments have historically been used in developed countries, where the concern has been with temporary income shortfalls and transitory poverty in otherwise relatively acceptable living standards.[31] Interest in social protection in a development context has been further triggered by recurrent economic and social crises, and concerns about poverty and adverse labour market conditions. In developing countries, where poverty is chronic, research has drawn attention to the need to not only tackle sharp declines in income, but also to address persistently low incomes. In such contexts, social protection and security must include not only elements of "protection", such as preventing a decline in living standards, but also of "promotion", including enhancing average living conditions and dealing with persistent deprivation.[34]

53. Women can benefit directly from non-contributory social assistance measures, in the form of cash transfers that are often targeted to low-income mothers. Such transfers can be made with associated conditional requirements or without conditions. While conditional cash transfers increase children's enrolment and attendance rates and result in improved health, there is very little evidence that it is the conditionalities that have brought about these changes, rather than the additional cash available to the household. The South African Child Support Grant is given to the primary care provider and is not conditional on a recipient's behaviour. Estimates suggest that well over 80 per cent of eligible children are getting the grant, with a positive impact on children's development. The South African evidence reveals the positive impact of unconditional grants.[31]

54. Allowances provided to women as caregivers, including through conditional cash transfer schemes can impose additional burdens of time and work on women who become responsible for fulfilling the conditions. In some cases, these programmes actually reinforce the gendered division of labour, by reinforcing care for children as the primary duty of mothers and not fathers.

55. Social assistance programmes should not therefore be seen as a substitute for State investment in public services. Social assistance payments ideally should be one component of a much more comprehensive system of social security and social services, and often work best when they are complemented by investments in public services.

56. Women also benefit from measures to reduce unpaid labour, especially when the burden of unpaid care is transferred to social or community provision, which may have the additional positive impact of creating jobs for women in the social and public utility sectors. Social protection measures can be combined with active

in Korea", M. Mackintosh and M. Koivusalo, eds., Commercialization of Health Care. Global and Local Dynamics and Policy Responses (Basingstoke, Palgrave/UNRISD, 2005).

[34] Jean Drèze and Amartya Sen, "Public action for social security: Foundations and strategy", Ahmad Ehtisham, Jean Drèze, John Hills and Amartya Sen, eds., *Social Security in Developing Countries* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1991).

labour market policies, such as job search and guidance measures; facilitating apprenticeships and other ways of creating labour market exposure; skill development; and assistance in advancing or completing formal education. Non-contributory pensions, disability allowances and other such cash transfers allow women who have performed mainly unpaid labour throughout their lives to receive some form of social security. Cash or in-kind provision for assets, training or public employment can also benefit women if designed with the specific aim to promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

57. The economic crisis has highlighted the need for broad-based social protection measures both in reducing poverty and vulnerability and as a counter-cyclical measure. In this context, the United Nations Social Protection Floor Initiative is very relevant.[31] It includes guarantees of basic income security in the form of social transfers in cash or in kind, such as pensions for the elderly and persons with disabilities, child benefits, income support benefits and/or employment guarantees and services for the unemployed and working poor, and universal access to essential affordable social services.[31]

58. The Social Protection Floor Initiative emphasizes the role of social protection measures in cushioning the impact of the crisis among vulnerable populations, serving as a macroeconomic stabilizer fuelling demand, enhancing access to markets and enabling people to overcome poverty and social exclusion. This approach represents a shift from the temporary, needs-based "social safety net" that targeted relief to vulnerable groups to cope with economic and social insecurities. Instead, it offers a rights-based approach to social protection, with guaranteed basic social rights.

VIII. Measures by Member States and support by United Nations agencies to address national priorities on social protection for women

59. The notion of increasing access to social protection has been gaining strength for over two decades. In recent years, many Governments have increased their efforts to either introduce or extend social protection measures. While, for the most part, they have been restricted to formal types of employment, countries such as Costa Rica and the Republic of Korea have addressed this issue by extending the coverage of health insurance programmes to the self-employed or other formally employed, by partially subsidizing their contribution and making it mandatory.[35]

60. In Bolivia, Botswana, rural areas of Brazil, Mauritius and Namibia, non-contributory pensions are now recognized as a universal right. Chile, Costa Rica and South Africa have also implemented means-tested non-contributory pensions.

61. Several Latin American countries have instituted raises to the minimum wage, increased public investment and expanded social protection, all of which have contributed to reductions in regional class inequality. Both female and male

[35] Camila Arza and others, "Gendered Impacts of Globalization: Employment and Social Protection", UNRISD Research Report for United Kingdom Department for International Development (Geneva, 2012).

employment rates have increased as a result of these policies, but the effect has been greater on women and thereby has reduced overall gender employment gaps. This significant change has implications for the starkest gender inequalities in the region, including in the areas of employment, wages and occupational segregation.[36]

62. Social protection programmes adopted over the last three decades have gone some way to reducing poverty through the provision of a social safety net for the most marginalized people.[37] In Mexico, the Progresa/Oportunidades programme, initiated in 1997, provides cash transfers mainly to women and has now reached more than 30 million people across all regions. Similarly in Brazil, the Bolsa Familia programme is the largest conditional cash transfer programme in the developing world, reaching over 46 million people, with 93 per cent of the payments to women as the legally responsible beneficiaries.

63. In recent years, several countries have implemented public works programmes, in recognition that the State should act as an employer of last resort to provide social assistance to those in need. In India, the 2005 Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act enhances livelihood security of households in rural areas of the country by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in every financial year to every household. In 2010, almost half of the beneficiaries of the programme were women.[35]

64. Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme, launched in 2004, provides a safety net that enables the very poor to become more resilient to shocks by building their own asset base. The Programme provides food and cash transfers in exchange for labour on public works programmes. Around 32 per cent of its beneficiaries are women. South Africa's Expanded Public Works Programme is also an example of employment guarantee scheme, which is designed to help those in need to cope with temporary loss of income due to a crisis or other shocks. About 79 per cent of the programme beneficiaries are women.[35]

65. Women's self-help groups have played an important role in mobilizing and organizing women to enhance their economic opportunities through strategies, including savings, credit and social organizing. While this is important, they have also championed legislative action to promote decent work for all. In India, the Unorganized Workers' Social Security Act, 2008 grants social protection to unorganized workers that includes access to health and maternity benefits, pensions and disability coverage and other benefits. The Self-Employed Women's Association played a major role in getting the law passed.

66. The United Nations system has been advocating with, and supporting, Governments to implement the social protection floor. Reported efforts include the formation of an international coalition of United Nations agencies, IMF, the World Bank, regional development banks, donors and NGOs; the launch of a joint UNDP, ILO and UN-Women publication on gender and social protection that has generated national dialogues in El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua; and the piloting of a

[36] Stephanie Seguino, "Critical analysis of progress on financing for gender equality and issues of policy coherence", paper presented at the fifty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (New York, 2012).

[37] Ariel Fiszbein and Norbert Schady, *Conditional Cash Transfers: Reducing Present and Future Poverty* (Washington, D.C., The World Bank, 2009).

gender and social protection systems course in Panama, which involved eight countries in the region and was replicated in Argentina.

67. ESCAP has implemented an interregional project on the theme "Strengthening social protection" in collaboration with ECA, ECLAC and ESCWA that supports Member States to develop effective social protection policies and programmes through the exchange of lessons learned and capacity-building activities.

68. A number of Member States also provided examples of the establishment of data collection systems and the use of sex-disaggregated data in relation to social protection for women. For instance, Slovenia collects sex-disaggregated data on issues such as the use of parental and paternal leave.

IX. Conclusions and recommendations

69. **Significant gender inequalities persist in women's access to decent work, including the continued and disproportionate representation of women in informal, insecure employment; specific constraints faced by vulnerable groups of women as a result of discrimination and geographic location; and unequal pay for equal work. Unpaid care work, which underpins the ability of both men and women to engage in paid work, continues to be primarily provided by women and girls, constraining their ability to participate equally in employment and social and political life, and to earn an income commensurate with that of men.**

70. **Social protection measures do not reach 80 per cent of the population, thereby largely failing to support the poorest and most disadvantaged or to provide social safety nets and support to reduce vulnerability and promote resilience to various kinds of shocks. This, coupled with insufficient access to quality social services, impacts women owing to their unequal position in the labour market, concentration in informal sector employment and primary responsibility for caregiving.**

71. **These trends have been exacerbated by the economic crisis and subsequent austerity measures in developed and developing countries alike. The economic crisis, while pushing more women into paid work, has also deepened the informality and the vulnerability of women's employment. Cuts to social protection and social services as a result of the crisis, together with austerity measures adopted by many Governments, have increased the burden of unpaid care work on women, thereby reinforcing and exacerbating existing gender inequalities.**

72. **As many leading economists have now recognized, investing in social protection measures is critical not only to ameliorate the worst effects of economic crises, but also to promote a robust and sustained recovery and promote sustainable livelihoods. This must be accompanied by accelerated efforts to address structural inequalities and discrimination that increase the likelihood of future economic crises. Without investing in the promotion of decent work, support for unpaid care work and the provision of comprehensive social protection and social services, recovery will be slower, the risk of recurring crisis greater and efforts to promote more inclusive, sustainable growth less successful.**

73. It is therefore encouraging to see many Member States investing in efforts to promote decent work and social protection for women in the context of the crisis and response to it. These efforts include vocational and skills training to enhance women's employability; measures to enhance rural women's access to resources; entrepreneurship development; measures to recognize, reduce and redistribute the burden of unpaid care work on women; and social protection measures.

74. Looking forward, however, a more transformative approach is needed. Member States are currently discussing development of the post-2015 agenda and the sustainable development goals. Participants in consultations to shape the new development agenda are calling for access to decent work, comprehensive social protection, quality social services, and economic transformation to ensure inclusive, equitable and sustainable economic growth. A universal, comprehensive and transformative approach to promotion of decent work for all, equal distribution of care responsibilities and access to social protection and social services is needed to achieve gender equality and women's rights and to realize the future we want for all.

75. In order to create and/or strengthen the enabling environment for women's access to decent work, the recognition, the reduction and the redistribution of unpaid care work, and access to social protection and social services, Member States are encouraged to consider the following policy measures and actions:

(a) Develop and increase investment in gender-responsive legislation, policies, budgets and programmes in these important areas;

(b) Promote decent work for all segments of society and strengthen labour market regulations and social provisions in order to create a more level playing field for women, including by enacting and enforcing minimum wage legislation, eliminating discriminatory wage practices, and promoting measures such as public work programmes to enable women to cope with recurrent crises and long-term unemployment;

(c) Promote women's rights at work by developing and implementing legislative measures and policies guaranteeing women's labour and human rights in the workplace, including minimum wages, social protection, reducing the gender wage gap, promoting collective bargaining and organizing recruitment, and retention and promotion policies targeting women;

(d) Recognize and support unpaid care work through the development of infrastructure and time-saving technologies and the provision of public services, including accessible and quality child care, incentives such as parental leave, flexible working arrangements and allowances;

(e) Design, develop and implement a universal, comprehensive and gender-responsive social protection system complemented by accessible, quality social services using maximum available resources towards progressive realization of these commitments and with a specific focus on ensuring access for vulnerable and marginalized groups of women;

(f) Regularly collect, analyse and disseminate sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics on women's access to decent work, unpaid care and social protection and monitor the impact of associated policy measures;

(g) Conduct time-use surveys and support the use of satellite accounts to determine the value of women's unpaid care to the economy, as well as regular time-use studies to determine the extent of women's and girls' unpaid care burden and the impact of associated policy measures.

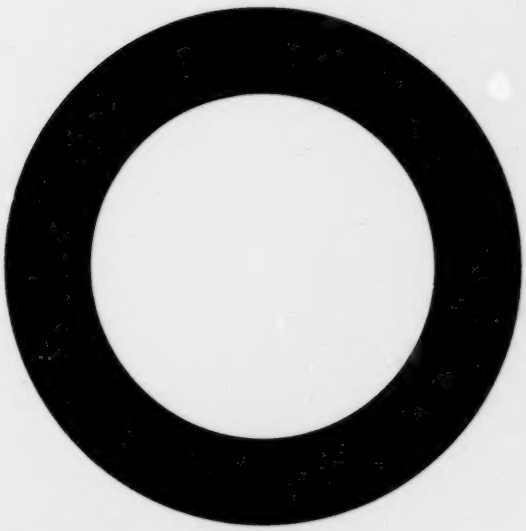
76. **The United Nations system and other international organizations are encouraged to:**

(a) Support Member States to conduct gender analysis of decent work, unpaid care and social protection policies and support the design of gender responsive legislation and policies in these areas;

(b) Support and advocate with Member States to increase and monitor their investment in gender-sensitive policies and programmes to promote women's access to decent work; recognize, reduce and redistribute the burden of unpaid care work on women and girls; and deliver gender-responsive social protection and social services;

(c) Support and promote innovative programme responses to ensure women's access to decent work, to recognize, measure, reduce and redistribute the unequal burden of care work, and promote gender-sensitive social protection initiatives and measures for women and girls, and support and encourage the scale-up of existing good practice programmes and initiatives.

(d) Support and facilitate Member State efforts to collect, analyse and disseminate sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics on women's access to decent work, unpaid care and social protection.



United Nations A/68/272

General Assembly

Distr.: General
5 August 2013

Original: English

Sixty-eighth session
Item 99 (dd) of the provisional agenda*
General and complete disarmament

The Arms Trade Treaty

Report of the Secretary-General

1. Pursuant to paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 67/234 B, entitled "The Arms Trade Treaty", the Secretary-General opened the Arms Trade Treaty for signature on 3 June 2013.

2. In paragraph 5 of the same resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its sixty-eighth session on the status of signature and ratification of the Treaty. The present report is issued pursuant to that request.

3. As at 5 August 2013, 81 States had signed the Treaty, with 2 of those having also deposited their instruments of ratification. In addition, in accordance with article 23 of the Treaty, two of the States declared that they would provisionally apply articles 6 and 7 of the Treaty, pending its entry into force. The list of 81 signatories and ratifying States is set out below.

Participant	*Signature*	*Provisional application under article 23*	*Ratification*
Albania	3 June 2013		
Antigua and Barbuda	3 June 2013		
Argentina	3 June 2013		
Australia	3 June 2013		
Austria	3 June 2013		
Bahamas	3 June 2013		
Belgium	3 June 2013		

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Participant	*Signature*	*Provisional application under article 23*	*Ratification*
Belize	3 June 2013		
Benin	3 June 2013		
Brazil	3 June 2013		
Bulgaria	2 July 2013		
Burkina Faso	3 June 2013		
Burundi	3 June 2013		
Chile	3 June 2013		
Costa Rica	3 June 2013		
Côte d'Ivoire	3 June 2013		
Croatia	3 June 2013		
Cyprus	3 June 2013		
Czech Republic	3 June 2013		
Denmark	3 June 2013		
Djibouti	3 June 2013		
Dominican Republic	3 June 2013		
El Salvador	5 June 2013		
Estonia	3 June 2013		
Finland	3 June 2013		
France	3 June 2013		
Germany	3 June 2013		
Greece	3 June 2013		
Grenada	3 June 2013		
Guatemala	24 June 2013		
Guinea	29 July 2013		
Guyana	3 June 2013		4 July 2013
Hungary	3 June 2013		
Iceland	3 June 2013	2 July 2013	2 July 2013
Ireland	3 June 2013		

Participant	*Signature*	*Provisional application under article 23*	*Ratification*
Italy	3 June 2013		
Jamaica	3 June 2013		
Japan	3 June 2013		
Latvia	3 June 2013		
Liberia	4 June 2013		
Libya	9 July 2013		
Liechtenstein	3 June 2013		
Lithuania	3 June 2013		
Luxembourg	3 June 2013		
Mali	3 June 2013		
Malta	3 June 2013		
Mauritania	3 June 2013		
Mexico	3 June 2013		
Montenegro	3 June 2013		
Mozambique	3 June 2013		
Netherlands	3 June 2013		
New Zealand	3 June 2013		
Norway	3 June 2013		
Palau	3 June 2013		
Panama	3 June 2013		
Paraguay	19 June 2013		
Poland	1 July 2013		
Portugal	3 June 2013		
Republic of Korea	3 June 2013		
Romania	3 June 2013		
Rwanda	5 June 2013		
Senegal	3 June 2013		
Seychelles	3 June 2013		

Participant	*Signature*	*Provisional application under article 25*	*Ratification*
Slovakia	10 June 2013		
Slovenia	3 June 2013		
Spain	3 June 2013	3 June 2013	
Saint Kitts and Nevis	5 June 2013		
Saint Lucia	3 June 2013		
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	3 June 2013		
Suriname	3 June 2013		
Sweden	3 June 2013		
Switzerland	3 June 2013		
Togo	3 June 2013		
Trinidad and Tobago	3 June 2013		
Turkey	2 July 2013		
Tuvalu	3 June 2013		
United Arab Emirates	9 July 2013		
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	3 June 2013		
United Republic of Tanzania	3 June 2013		
Uruguay	3 June 2013		
Vanuatu	26 July 2013		

United Nations A/68/273

General Assembly

Distr.: General
5 August 2013

Original: English

Sixty-eighth session
Item 134 of the provisional agenda*
Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations

Activities of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee for the period from 1 August 2012 to 31 July 2013

Report of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee

Summary

The present report covers the period from 1 August 2012 to 31 July 2013. During the period, the Independent Audit Advisory Committee held four sessions. The sessions were presided over by John F. S. Muwanga (Uganda) as Chair and Adrian Strachan (Jamaica) as Vice-Chair in 2012, and by Joseph Christopher Mihm, Jr. (United States of America) as Chair and Vadim Dubinkin (Russian Federation) as Vice-Chair in 2013. All of the members of the Committee attended each of the four sessions during the reporting period.

Section II of the report contains an overview of the activities of the Committee, the status of its recommendations, and its plans for 2014. Section III sets out the detailed comments of the Committee.

* A/68/150.

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I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, by resolution 60/248, established the Independent Audit Advisory Committee as a subsidiary body to serve in an expert advisory capacity and to assist it in fulfilling its oversight responsibilities. In accordance with its terms of reference (see General Assembly resolution 61/275, annex), the Committee is authorized to hold up to four sessions per year. The Committee has held 23 sessions since its inception in January 2008.

2. In accordance with its terms of reference, the Committee submits an annual report to the General Assembly, containing a summary of its activities and related advice. The present, sixth annual report covers the period from 1 August 2012 to 31 July 2013.

3. The observations, comments and recommendations of the Committee on the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the oversight activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) are contained in the body of the present report under section III.C.

4. The Committee is also required to advise the General Assembly on, inter alia, the compliance of management with audit and other oversight recommendations; the overall effectiveness of the risk management procedures and deficiencies in the internal control systems; the operational implications of the financial statements and the reports of the Board of Auditors; and the appropriateness of the accounting practices and disclosure practices in the Organization. The Committee also advises the Assembly on the steps necessary to facilitate cooperation among the oversight bodies.

5. The current report addresses the issues identified during the reporting period as they pertain to the above responsibilities of the Committee.

II. Activities of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee

A. Overview of the sessions of the Committee

6. During the reporting period, the Committee held four sessions: from 11 to 14 December 2012 (twentieth session); from 4 to 6 February 2013 (twenty-first session); from 10 to 12 April 2013 (twenty-second session); and from 1 to 3 July 2013 (twenty-third session). All of the sessions were held at United Nations Headquarters.

7. The Committee functions under its adopted rules of procedure, as contained in the annex to its first annual report (A/63/328). To date, all members of the Committee have a 100 per cent attendance rate at its sessions. All the decisions of the Committee have been unanimous; however, its rules of procedure make provision for members to record their dissent with decisions taken by the majority.

8. At its twentieth session, in December 2012, the members elected Joseph Christopher Mihm, Jr. (United States of America) as Chair and Vadim Dubinkin (Russian Federation) as Vice-Chair for 2013. Additional information about the Committee can be found on its website in all the official languages of the United Nations (www.un.org/ga/iaac/).

9. Since its establishment, the Committee has submitted 15 reports to the General Assembly, 3 of which have been submitted during the current reporting period. These include reports to the Assembly, through the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, on the proposed budget of OIOS under the support account for peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 (A/67/772) and on the proposed programme budget for internal oversight for the biennium 2014-2015 (A/68/86), as well as the Committee's annual report to the Assembly for the period from 1 August 2011 to 31 July 2012 (A/67/259).

B. Status of the recommendations of the Committee

10. As at 30 June 2013, the Committee had made a number of recommendations in its reports based on its experience and its interactions with and briefings from the various departments and offices.

11. Although it meets only four times per year, typically for three days per session, the Committee has registered important achievements to date, particularly in relation to the operations of OIOS. The Committee follows up on the implementation of its recommendations as a standard agenda item at each session and looks forward to seeing the full effect of the actions taken by OIOS and by management. Some of the significant recommendations made by the Committee during the reporting period relate to:

(a) The need for OIOS to place more emphasis on auditing of mission-based procurement activities given the high level of procurement done at the mission level, and the need to refine its risk-based workplan in order to ensure that it fully captures such high-risk areas;

(b) The recommendation that all three divisions of OIOS finalize their reports, including those of investigation assignments, in a timely manner if such reports are to be of any relevance to decision makers;

(c) The recommendation that OIOS in general and the Investigation Division in particular re-examine their risk assessment processes to ensure that relevant risks (such as those associated with procurement) are appropriately considered and reflected in the workplan;

(d) The recommendation that the Investigation Division undertake a concerted effort to address the extended delays affecting its completion of investigations;

(e) The recommendation that in the process of improving its efficiency and effectiveness, OIOS should avoid the "silo" effect among its divisions;

(f) The need for the Management Committee to ensure that the various departments, including those considered to be in the vanguard of enterprise risk management, embed systematic risk management systems in their operations;

(g) The need for the Secretary-General to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the status of enterprise risk management in the Secretariat.

C. Overview of the plans of the Committee for 2014

12. The Committee undertook its responsibilities, as set out in its terms of reference, in accordance with the scheduling of the sessions of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the General Assembly. The Committee will continue to schedule its sessions and activities to ensure coordinated interaction with intergovernmental bodies and timely availability of its reports. In a preliminary review of its workplan, the Committee identified several key areas that will be the main focus for each of its four sessions for fiscal year 2014 (see table).

Workplan of the Committee for 2014

Session	*Key focus area*	*Intergovernmental consideration of the report of the Committee*
Twenty-fourth	Review of the 2014 workplan of OIOS in light of the workplans of other oversight bodies	Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, first quarter 2014
	Proposed budget of OIOS under the support account for peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015	General Assembly, second part of the resumed sixty-eighth session
	Coordination and cooperation among oversight bodies	
Twenty-fifth	Status of implementation of oversight bodies' recommendations	General Assembly, second part of the resumed sixty-eighth session
	Risk management and internal controls	
	Coordination and cooperation among oversight bodies	
Twenty-sixth	Operational implications of issues and trends in the financial statements and reports of the Board of Auditors	
	Coordination and cooperation among oversight bodies	
	Preparation of the annual report of the Committee	
Twenty-seventh	Workplans of OIOS for 2015	General Assembly, main part of the sixty-ninth session
	Proposed budget of OIOS under the support account for peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016	
	Review of the enterprise risk management and internal control framework in the Organization	
	Election of the Chair and Vice-Chair for 2015	

13. In the discussion on planning for 2014, the Committee identified the following relevant events that will have an impact on its work activities:

(a) The request of the General Assembly, in paragraph 2 of section III of its resolution 67/258, that the Committee review the practice of publishing audit reports of OIOS and report to the Assembly at the main part of its sixty-ninth session;

(b) The various reform/transformational initiatives that the Organization has embarked on, such as the accountability system, the global field support strategy, adoption of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) and the enterprise resource planning project (Umoja);

(c) The ongoing responses to the recently concluded external assessment of the various divisions of OIOS.

III. Detailed comments of the Committee

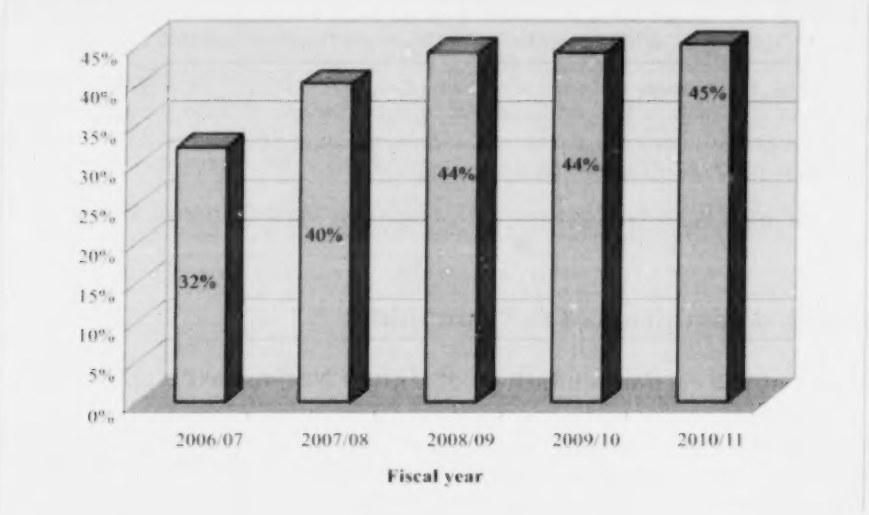
A. Status of the recommendations of United Nations oversight bodies

14. Under paragraph 2 (b) of its terms of reference, the Committee is mandated to advise the General Assembly on measures to ensure the compliance of management with audit and other oversight recommendations. During the reporting period, the Committee reviewed the status of implementation by management of the recommendations of United Nations oversight bodies, as a standard practice.

1. Board of Auditors

15. According to the report of the Board of Auditors on the United Nations peacekeeping operations for the 12-month period from 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012 (A/67/5 (Vol. II), chap. II), the rate of implementation of the recommendations made for the financial period ended 30 June 2011 in respect of peacekeeping operations was 45 per cent, which is slightly higher than the rate of 44 per cent for the period ended 30 June 2010 (see figure I). The Board noted that the Administration had improved the monitoring of the implementation of its recommendations and reinforced the guidance to the missions on issues concerned. The Board welcomed the progress made while encouraging management to intensify its effort in implementing the remaining recommendations.

Figure I
Rate of implementation of recommendations of the Board of Auditors for peacekeeping operations



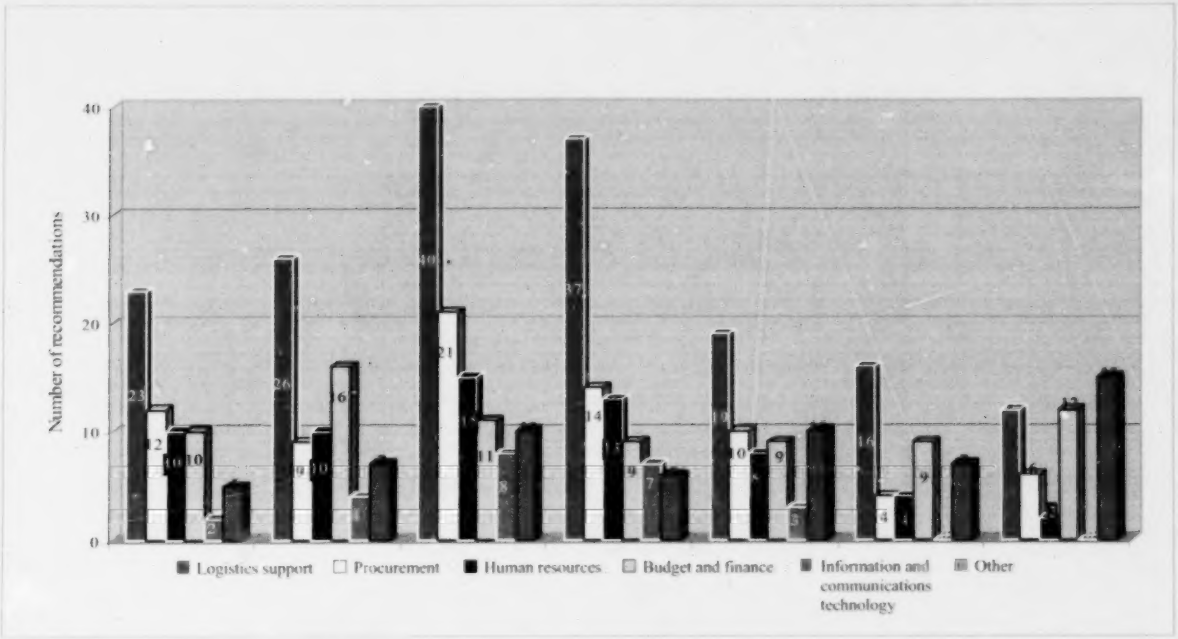
16. **The Committee continues to acknowledge the work of the Management Committee in ensuring that the main recommendations of the Board are implemented, and appreciates that some of the recommendations of the Board were strategic in nature and may take longer to implement. The Committee also acknowledges the steady improvement in the rate of implementation of the Board's recommendations. The Committee, however, believes that there is still room for improvement.**

Thrust areas

17. In paragraph 19 of its report for the period from 1 August 2011 to 31 July 2012 (A/67/259), the Committee reviewed the thrust areas addressed in the various recommendations contained in the reports of the Board of Auditors on peacekeeping operations. The Committee noted that logistics support was the area where the Board had issued the most recommendations over the previous six years, while procurement had shown the largest decline in the number of recommendations. The Committee also noted an overall trend of a declining number of recommendations, but was not sure whether that decline was as a result of improved effectiveness of the internal control framework of the Organization.

18. During the period under review, the Committee followed up with the Board on this and other issues of interest to the Committee. The Board indicated that, as noted in its report on the implementation of its recommendations relating to the biennium 2010-2011 (A/68/163, para. 14), the reduction in the number of recommendations was not a reflection of its opinion on whether management control was improving or not. However, the trend analysis reflects a stabilized level of recommendations (below 50) for peacekeeping operations.

Figure II
Thrust areas addressed in recommendations of the Board of Auditors on peacekeeping operations



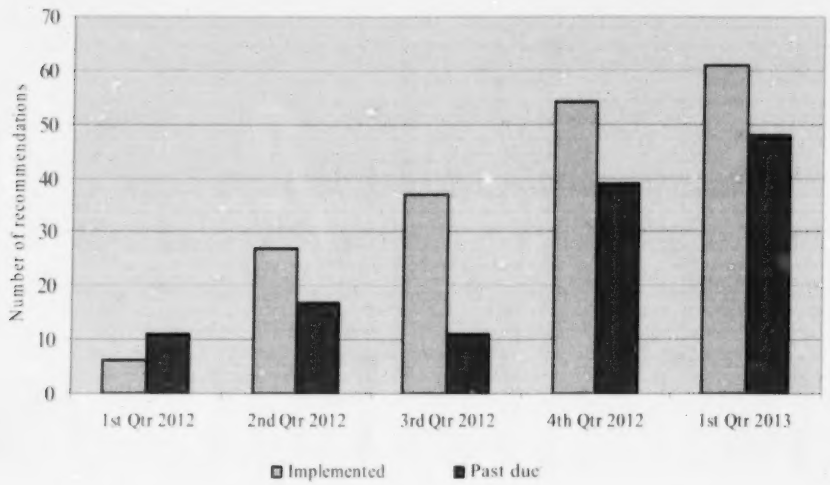
19. Regarding the thrust areas, the 2011/12 fiscal year shows a continued reduction in the number of recommendations pertaining to logistics support and human resources, and increases in the areas of finance and budget, procurement and other (most of the latter relate to the global field support strategy). **The Committee will continue to dialogue with the Board on these and other developments in this regard.**

2. Office of Internal Oversight Services

20. As reported in its activity report for the period from 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011 (A/66/286 (Part I)), effective 1 January 2012, OIOS changed the way it prepared its audit reports and classified its recommendations. The Committee was informed that the Management Committee had accordingly adjusted the way it monitored outstanding critical OIOS recommendations. In the new system, all critical recommendations are brought to the attention of the Management Committee for follow-up action, and focus is placed on those that are past due. The Committee received quarterly updates from OIOS on the implementation of critical recommendations. Figure III provides a cumulative quarterly trend analysis of the implementation status of critical recommendations issued by OIOS.

Figure III

Cumulative quarterly status of implementation of critical recommendations of the Office of Internal Oversight Services



21. In its report for the period from 1 August 2011 to 31 July 2012 (A/67/259), the Committee reported that during the first quarter of 2012, 6 recommendations (35 per cent) had been implemented and 11 (65 per cent) were past due. Accordingly, the Committee recommended that the Management Committee continue to strengthen the monitoring process, especially in light of the fact that 65 per cent of the critical recommendations targeted for implementation in the first quarter were past due (A/67/259, paras. 20 and 21). As shown in figure III, during the fourth quarter of 2012 and the first quarter of 2013, the number of past due recommendations rose rather significantly. The Committee is not sure whether this development is a result of programme managers setting ambitious target dates or some factors beyond their control.

22. **The Committee notes that management implemented a cumulative total of 61 (56 per cent) of the recommendations (issued in the five quarters) that were due for implementation by the first quarter of 2013. The Committee is concerned that the quarterly number of past due recommendations continues to rise. The Committee therefore recommends that the Management Committee determine the causes of the growth in the number of past due recommendations and ensure that programme managers adhere to the target dates they set for implementing OIOS recommendations.**

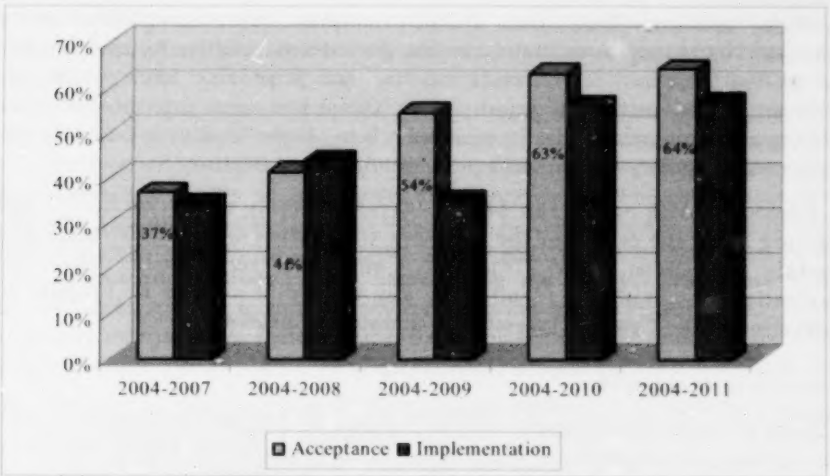
3. Joint Inspection Unit

23. The Committee received an update from the Chair of the Joint Inspection Unit on a number of issues, including the acceptance/implementation rates of the recommendations made by the Unit. The Committee had noted that the overall

acceptance and implementation rates for recommendations of the Unit continued to be a challenge, and that the situation was expected to improve when the anticipated web-based tracking system was in place (A/67/259, para. 22). According to the Joint Inspection Unit, the system was rolled out towards the end of 2012.

24. The Committee noted that, according to the Joint Inspection Unit, the aggregate acceptance rate of the Unit's recommendations by the Secretariat continued to improve, from 63.1 per cent for the 2004-2010 period to 64.2 per cent for 2004-2011. The aggregate implementation rate also improved, from 56.2 per cent for the 2004-2010 period, to 56.9 per cent for 2004-2011 (see figure IV). **The Committee commends management for the effort it has put into improving the acceptance and implementation rates of recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit.**

Figure IV
Status of acceptance/implementation of recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit by the Secretariat



B. Risk management and internal control framework

25. Paragraphs 2 (f) and (g) of the terms of reference of the Committee (see General Assembly resolution 61/275, annex) mandate the Committee to advise the Assembly on the quality and overall effectiveness of risk management procedures and on deficiencies in the internal control framework of the United Nations.

1. Accountability system

26. The Committee noted in its previous annual report (A/67/259, para. 28) that the General Assembly, in paragraph 6 of its resolution 66/257, had requested the Secretary-General to develop, as a priority, a clearly defined and well-documented plan that includes clear objectives, responsibilities and a timeline for accomplishing the specific actions he is undertaking to strengthen accountability. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, in paragraph 7 of its report

(A/67/776) on the second progress report of the Secretary-General on the accountability system in the Secretariat (A/67/714), expressed concern that no such a plan had been presented in the report of the Secretary-General. The Independent Audit Advisory Committee received quarterly updates from management on the implementation of the accountability resolution and was informed that management was implementing the resolution and would include a plan in the third progress report.

27. **The Committee welcomes the progress made by management in implementing this and other aspects of the accountability resolution and looks forward to receiving further updates in this regard.**

2. Enterprise risk management

Key risk identification

28. The Committee has noted a steady interest in enterprise risk management in the Organization, which, as pointed out earlier (A/67/259, para. 30), has resulted in the establishment of an enterprise risk management committee (the Management Committee) and the finalization of the enterprise risk management policy framework. The Management Committee has moved a step further by ensuring that some of the previous recommendations on enterprise risk management are implemented as a matter of priority. The Committee was informed that the Management Committee has requested the Under-Secretary-General for Management to identify the top strategic risks of the Organization.

29. **Consistent with paragraph 24 of General Assembly resolution 66/257 and paragraph 32 of the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/67/776), the Committee recommends that the Organization systematically identify the key risks that need to be brought to the attention of the General Assembly as a matter of priority.**

Risk management champions

30. In its previous annual report (A/67/259, paras. 31-36), the Committee reported on the various "risk management champions" of the Organization. During the period under review the Committee focused its effort on following up with these champions to assess the progress and to identify other emerging champions.

Capital master plan

31. With respect to the capital master plan, the Committee previously reported that the plan had embedded risk management principles right from the beginning of the project and had continued to consider risk management as a dynamic management tool where old/existing risks were identified, eliminated, lowered or elevated. The Committee also reported that a key aspect of the risk management process was that individual risks on the matrix were "owned" by specific individuals, who were responsible for monitoring the risks and for proposing adjustments to the likelihood of such risks and risk mitigation strategies (A/67/259, para. 32).

32. The Committee noted paragraph 29 of the report of OIOS on the in-depth technical construction audit of the plan (A/67/330), where OIOS found some shortcomings pertaining to the risk management process of the project. In this regard, the Committee requested a status update from the Office of the Capital

Master Plan. During the briefing, the Office indicated that it had taken steps to address the recommendations of OIOS, including development of risk quantification analysis, the use of an external consultant to carry out an annual project risk review and the use of a Monte Carlo simulation methodology to assign individual potential costs. The Office further informed the Committee that its risk management goal was to increase the probability and impact of positive events, and decrease the probability and impact of negative events.

33. **The Committee commends the effort the Office of the Capital Master Plan has put into addressing previously identified weaknesses in its risk management process and looks forward to further updates.**

Department of Field Support

34. As earlier reported (A/67/259, para. 33), the Department of Field Support told the Committee that it believed that the size and complexity of its operation made risk an ever-present factor in everything that it and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations did, and that a systematic risk management process was critical.

35. The Committee was further informed that a professional enterprise risk management officer had consequently been appointed to design a risk management programme and accompanying policy document for the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support. According to the Department of Field Support, that would culminate in the issuance of formal implementing guidelines that would standardize the practical approach, thus mitigating the risk that missions would adopt a variety of risk management approaches with varying degrees of efficacy. The two departments also noted that risk management would be directly linked to departmental, field operation and project objectives, and make extensive use of scenario planning, while emphasizing the use of quantitative analysis techniques as opposed to simple, subjective scoring. In that regard, the Departments indicated that they are incorporating risk management into their Senior Mission Administration and Resource Training (SMART) programme (A/67/259, para. 34).

36. During the reporting period, the Committee followed up with the Department of Field Support on these initiatives and was informed that the enterprise risk management guidelines had been finalized and approved in December 2012. The Department further noted that the guidelines would provide an agreed approach through which the two departments would implement risk management.

37. The Committee was also informed that a document on the risk management framework for the global field support strategy had been finalized and provided a project-specific example of how the Department of Field Support was introducing a formal risk management method into its planning process.

38. **The Committee appreciates these initiatives and encourages the Department of Field Support to continue its effort to put risk management at the forefront of all its operations. The Committee also looks forward to receiving further updates in this regard.**

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

39. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs informed the Committee that it considered risk identification and mitigation very important aspects of its operation. Accordingly, the Office had started to put in place some

elements of the enterprise risk management system, and was in the process of establishing a comprehensive risk register (A/67/259, para. 35).

40. During the reporting period, the Committee met with the Office to get a status update on its risk management process. The Office informed the Committee that it had adopted a modest approach to enterprise risk management based on international standards (ISO 31000), private sector best practices and lessons learned from other United Nations entities.

41. In this regard, the Office indicated that it had established its own enterprise risk management framework which comprised a corporate risk register, risk management policy instructions and a field office performance framework. The Office also informed the Committee of other risk management initiatives under way, including (a) the security risk assessment at country offices; (b) addressing strategic risks in the context of the corporate governance and management plan; and (c) the Transformative Agenda of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, which would address other strategic risks that could jeopardize the effectiveness of the humanitarian system. **The Committee welcomes these initiatives and looks forward to receiving further updates in this regard at its future sessions.**

Status of the implementation of enterprise risk management in the Secretariat

42. In its resolution 67/258, the General assembly endorsed the Committee's recommendation contained in paragraph 40 of its report (A/67/259) regarding a comprehensive assessment of the status of enterprise risk management in the Secretariat. The Committee followed up with management on the status of implementation of this and related recommendations. The Secretariat informed the Committee of the progress achieved in establishing the timelines and parties responsible for conducting the assessment. As noted in the report of the Secretary-General (A/67/714, sect. IX), the Secretariat-wide enterprise risk management assessment is to be undertaken by June 2014. **The Committee joins with the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (see A/67/776, para. 32) in encouraging the Secretary-General to expedite this process and looks forward to receiving further updates in this regard.**

Risk mitigation and the silo effect

43. During its discussions with management and the risk management champions (see para. 30 above), the Committee noted a few recurring themes. First, risk management is being practised by and embedded in several departments and offices. Second, given the uniqueness of their programmatic activities, most of these departments have come up with their own risk management frameworks and guidelines. Third, the departments that have embedded risk into their operations are generally working independently of one another.

44. Against this background, some departments have raised the concern of "risk transfer", whereby one department's efforts to mitigate a particular risk — say financial risk — have resulted in other departments facing different but equally important risks that may lead to the latter failing or being constrained in achieving their objectives. An example was given where, as a result of the shortcomings of the oil-for-food programme, management went into a phase of tightening internal controls to the point of rendering some programme delivery difficult. Similarly, efforts to mitigate security risk may end up affecting the ability of entities such as

the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to deliver on their mandate. Such examples represent risk mitigation strategies that result in shifting the risk from one department or office of the Organization to another, and this is most likely to occur in organizations whose risk management systems operate in silos.

45. **Given the interdependency of the various departments and offices in achieving the Organization's objectives, the Committee recommends that the Management Committee and the Under-Secretary-General for Management, who is the official responsible for enterprise risk management in the Organization, undertake every effort to ensure a genuinely integrative approach to risk management that looks across the Organization's units to identify and manage risk in a coordinated and comprehensive way. This will be achieved through a concerted effort of breaking down or avoiding silos, in other words, by managing holistically the portfolio of risks facing the Organization.**

C. Effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the audit activities and other functions of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

46. The terms of reference of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee provide for it to advise the General Assembly on aspects of internal oversight (General Assembly resolution 61/275, annex, paras. 2 (c)-(e)). In undertaking its mandate, the Committee has maintained its standard practice of meeting with the Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services and other senior OIOS officials during its sessions. The discussions have focused on OIOS workplan and budget execution, significant findings reported by OIOS, operational constraints (if any), post incumbency and the status of implementation by management of OIOS recommendations, including the critical recommendations that had not been implemented by management, strengthening investigations and funding arrangements.

1. Workplan and budget of the Office of Internal Oversight Services for 2012-2013

47. The responsibilities of the Committee with respect to OIOS as set out in the terms of reference include the examination of the workplans of OIOS, taking into account the workplans of the other oversight bodies, and advising the General Assembly thereon.

48. The Committee reported its observations and recommendations with regard to OIOS workplans in its report on the proposed budget of OIOS under the support account for peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 (A/67/772) and its report on the proposed programme budget for internal oversight for the biennium 2014-2015 (A/68/86).

Value of the services delivered by the Office

49. In its report of 1 March 2013 (A/67/772, para. 11), the Committee recalled Standard 2000 of the Institute of Internal Auditors, which provides that a chief audit executive must effectively manage the internal audit activity to ensure that it adds value to the Organization. In an earlier report (A/63/703, para. 25), the Committee had recommended that OIOS define the value of the service that it delivers to the Organization. Since then the Committee has reiterated this recommendation and has followed up on its implementation. Some of the initiatives OIOS has undertaken to

address this matter have included the introduction of key performance indicators and the introduction of programme impact pathways, or what is also known as the programme logic model.

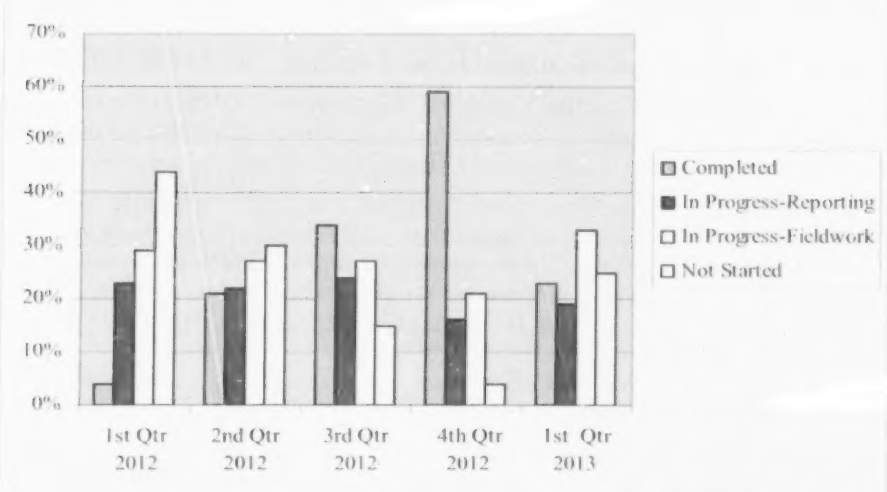
50. **The Committee notes the effort OIOS has made in this initiative. However, the Committee also remains concerned at the slow progress in fully addressing this recommendation.**

Workplan implementation

51. The Committee continued to monitor the implementation of the workplans of the divisions of OIOS and the timelines of reports. In paragraph 33 of its report of 25 August 2009 (A/64/288), the Committee indicated that it considered it important that reports be finalized in a timely manner, as the value of oversight work diminished when reports took too long to complete. The Committee learned, through feedback from OIOS clients and presentations by OIOS, that assignments continue to take a long time to be finalized.

52. In paragraph 46 of its previous annual report (A/67/259), the Committee reiterated its recommendation that the duration and number of audit assignments carried over to following periods should be reduced if OIOS was to improve on the effectiveness of its oversight work. During the reporting period the Committee followed up with OIOS on the implementation of this recommendation, an issue which was also raised during the IAD external quality assessment review of the Internal Audit Division. Figure V below shows the quarterly performance of the Division as far as deliverable assignments is concerned.

Figure V
Status of 2012-2013 deliverable audit assignments



53. As far as the Investigation Division is concerned, the Committee stated in paragraph 46 of its report (A/67/259) that as at 31 May 2012, 40 per cent of all cases for investigation were more than 12 months old and 12.7 per cent were more

than two years old. According to the most recent information provided to the Committee, in the first quarter of 2013 the proportion of cases that were outstanding for more than one year rose to 55 per cent and those outstanding for more than two years fell only slightly to 12 per cent.

54. **The Committee acknowledges the steps OIOS is putting in place, especially with respect to internal audits. However the Committee remains concerned at the lack of progress in improving the performance of the Investigations Division. The Committee therefore recommends that OIOS put in place a concrete plan of action to address the delays in finalizing investigation assignments.**

55. With respect to the budget for OIOS, the Committee made several recommendations in its reports mentioned in paragraph 48 above (A/67/772 and A/68/86). The Committee was informed that most of the resources requested for OIOS under the support account budget for the period 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 which the Committee had supported were approved by the General Assembly, with the exception of the redeployment of two investigation posts from Nairobi to Entebbe and UNMIS and the conversion of 37 per cent of the general temporary assistance positions to posts. As far as budget execution is concerned, the Committee in its previous reports had voiced its concern at the low rates of execution, which in turn affected the full implementation of the workplans of the divisions. During the period under review the Committee continued to receive updates from OIOS and noted a general improvement in the budget execution rates.

56. **The Committee, however, is concerned that this improvement has not yet fully translated into improvements in programme delivery, as exemplified by the concerns raised above regarding absence of timely completion and/or excessive carry-over of assignments. The Committee therefore recommends that OIOS enhance its effort to ensure that there is congruence between budget execution and programme delivery.**

2. Vacant posts in the Office

57. In its previous reports to the General Assembly, the Committee had reported on the high number of vacancies in OIOS, as had the Board of Auditors in some of its reports. During its routine meeting with OIOS, the Committee followed up on this matter and was pleased to note continued improvement in the vacancy rates. For instance, OIOS informed the Committee that as at 30 June 2013, the overall vacancy rate was 14 per cent, a slight improvement from the 15.3 per cent reported by the Committee in its previous annual report (A/67/259) and a marked improvement from the 21.5 per cent rate reported the year before that (A/66/299).

58. **The Committee commends OIOS for improving its vacancy situation, an issue which had been a concern of the Committee since 2008, and notes that with improved vacancy rates comes the expectation that workplans will be implemented on a timely basis.**

3. External quality assessments and reviews of the divisions of the Office

Internal Audit Division

59. According to Standard 1312 of the Institute of Internal Auditors, internal audit activities are to undergo an external assessment at least once every five years. In an earlier annual report, the Committee noted that OIOS had engaged the Institute of Internal Auditors to undertake an external quality assessment. The objectives of the review were to assess the conformity of Internal Audit Division practices and processes with its audit manual and with the standards of the Institute of Internal Auditors, to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the Division in meeting the needs of stakeholders and to make recommendations to improve and streamline the internal audit process (A/66/299, para. 41).

60. In paragraph 51 of its previous annual report (A/67/259, para. 51), the Committee noted that the external assessment had resulted in nine significant recommendations, namely the need for a consolidated audit universe and risk assessment and the need to prepare annual plans based on risk assessment rather than available resources or existing funding arrangement, to expand the information technology audit universe to assure adequate risk coverage, to eliminate excessive duration of audits, to develop an internal audit "charter", to develop a continuing professional development strategy, to revisit the contents of risk assessment engagement reports and to monitor progress by focusing on critical and important recommendations. As a result of those findings, OIOS received a "partially conforms" grade.

61. Over the course of the reporting period the Committee followed up with OIOS on its progress in implementing the recommendations of the external assessment. **During its recent session, the Committee was informed that all of the recommendations except one, concerning the internal audit charter, had been implemented. The Committee welcomes this development.**

Inspection and Evaluation Division

62. In response to the Committee's prior recommendations, OIOS provided the Committee with the final report of the external assessment of the Inspection and Evaluation Division. The Committee was informed that the Division planned to focus on several major initiatives highlighted in the consultant's report, namely improving strategic relevance of the evaluation function; increased use of the work of the Division; improved quality of the work process; strengthening of the communication strategy; development of evaluation capacity; and support for the Secretariat evaluation function.

63. The Committee followed up with OIOS on the status of implementation of the recommendations and was informed, inter alia, that a revised risk assessment had been completed as part of the 2014-2015 workplan; the quality assessment system had been reviewed and revised comprehensively; and work was ongoing with regard to strengthening of the communication strategy and development of the evaluation capacity. **The Committee looks forward to receiving a comprehensive update on the implementation of the remaining recommendations of the review panel.**

Investigations Division

64. With respect to the external review of the Investigations Division, the Committee was informed that 91 recommendations had been issued by the reviewers on matters associated with mandate, organizational structure and reporting. The main findings of the review related to delay in completing investigation assignments; the quality of investigation reports that can meet the high evidentiary standards of the current system of justice; the need to establish the Division as an essential player in the accountability system by addressing high-risk areas, including non-staff matters; and the need to address category I and II cases within the context of the resource constraints.

65. The Division further indicated that it was assessing the feasibility of the recommendations against resource constraints, and that a programme implementation plan would follow. **The Committee recommends that the programme implementation plan take into account the implications of the pending report requested by the General Assembly on strengthening investigations.**

4. Strengthening investigations

66. In its report of 27 August 2010 (A/65/329, para. 24), the Committee recalled that, in paragraph 18 of its resolution 62/247 on strengthening investigations, the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to prepare for its consideration and approval, in close cooperation with OIOS, a report providing detailed information on terms of reference with regard to the proposed comprehensive review of investigations in the United Nations.

67. In its subsequent annual report (A/66/299, para. 44), the Committee reported that a task force, chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General, had been established to address the request of the Assembly. The objective of the task force was to review all types of investigations being conducted in the Secretariat; make suggestions on the need to improve systems; examine steps that would be required to implement change; and prepare the terms of reference that had been requested by the Assembly in resolution 62/247.

68. In its report of 6 August 2012 (A/67/259, para. 54), the Committee recommended that the Secretary-General finalize the long-awaited proposed terms of reference on the comprehensive review of investigations in the United Nations. The Committee has since been informed that the task force completed its work and the Management Committee approved, in principle, the proposal to transfer all investigations to OIOS in the long term, as a means of professionalizing and strengthening the investigations function within the Secretariat. That decision was subject to, inter alia, consideration of the full implications of the potential structure and resource implications associated with implementation, including respecting the request of the General Assembly in resolution 62/247. **The Committee welcomes these important developments and looks forward to being informed of further progress in this regard.**

Risk-based work planning

69. With respect to risk-based work planning, the Committee in May 2011 welcomed the fact that OIOS had agreed to incorporate a more proactive and risk-

based approach into its workplan (A/66/85, para. 20). In paragraph 58 of its 2011/12 annual report (A/67/259), the Committee noted that it was not sure whether the low level of procurement-related investigations in the Secretariat was due to improved controls instituted since the establishment of the Procurement Task Force, or failure to report and/or detect fraud, especially among suppliers. The Committee further pointed that the absence of a proactive fraud risk detection system in the Investigations Division made it difficult to be sure that the low rate of procurement investigations was a result of improved controls. That led the Committee to recommend that OIOS include, in the context of its future budget submissions for the Investigations Division, a risk-based workplan for the Committee to review.

70. During the period under review, the Committee followed up with OIOS on the status of implementation of this recommendation and, as reported in paragraph 25 of the Committee's report (A/68/86) OIOS informed that the Investigation Division had established a proactive investigation unit. OIOS also informed the Committee that it had improved its forensic capacity as well as the capacity in procurement-related fraud.

71. **While the Committee welcomes this development, it is concerned with the slow progress regarding this important aspect of its work, and recommends that OIOS demonstrates concrete development in this area in its future workplans.**

D. Financial reporting

72. Under paragraphs 2 (h) and (i) of its terms of reference, the Committee has the responsibility to advise the General Assembly on the operational implications of the issues and trends apparent in the financial statements of the Organization and the reports of the Board of Auditors, and on the appropriateness of accounting policies and disclosure practices, and to assess changes and risks in those policies.

73. During the reporting period, the Committee engaged in discussions with the Board of Auditors, the Under-Secretary-General for Management and the Controller on a number of issues relating to financial reporting. The issues discussed included:

(a) The status of implementation of IPSAS in the United Nations, including recent progress, challenges faced, and the synchronization of the IPSAS timeline and strategy with that of Umoja;

(b) The implementation of Umoja, the interdependence of Umoja with full IPSAS implementation, the progress made following the launch of the Umoja pilot and challenges ahead, including the launch of cluster I slated for October 2013.

74. With respect to the implementations of IPSAS, the Committee was routinely apprised of the progress made in meeting milestones of the project such as the opening balances for the peacekeeping operations (July 2013), the dry runs, finalization of the policy framework and benefits realization. The Controller also noted some challenges that the project faces, including transition and alignment with Umoja; inventory and fixed asset valuation; and the impact of IPSAS financial reporting requirements on the work of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee.

75. With respect to inventory and assets valuation, the Secretariat was of the view that a narrow interpretation of IPSAS (especially with regard to inventory valuation) could put the Organization in a position where service/programme delivery could be compromised. The Committee was informed that the Board's position on this subject was not yet aligned with that of the Secretariat. For instance, the Board's position was that all inventories warehoused should be capitalized under IPSAS. However, the Secretariat believes that accurate valuation of inventory in a military-type environment was almost impossible, especially for small parts and even in an environment of standardized systems. Given that attaining 100 per cent inventory valuation may not be achievable in all peacekeeping environments, that IPSAS is not conclusive on the required accounting treatment in this area, and that there is no clear unique path regarding items consumed internally in the rendering of non-revenue producing services, the Secretariat has proposed, inter alia, to anchor the United Nations policy regarding inventory valuation in IPSAS principles and to benchmark against IPSAS-compliant entities. With regard to benchmarking, the Committee was informed that several IPSAS-compliant United Nations entities such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Food Programme and the International Civil Aviation Organization had similar policies as the Secretariat, yet they did not capitalize inventory held for internal consumption.

76. **The Committee acknowledges the dialogue that management continues to have with the Board of Auditors and other oversight bodies in this respect and the intensified collaboration with the Umoja project. The Committee believes that in some instances, especially where IPSAS is silent on an issue, the Secretariat will have to take duly justified management decisions. With respect to the impact of the financial reporting requirements, the Committee agrees with the Board that this is an issue that will have to be ultimately decided on by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee.**

77. With respect to Umoja, the Committee held several sessions with the director of the project on the progress thus far. The director informed the Committee that there had been good progress and that the project was back on schedule. The progress was exemplified by the recently concluded "go live" process whereby the Umoja team had managed to successfully launch, on 1 July 2013, its much-anticipated pilot in select missions. The Committee was also informed that in spite of the progress to date, the project remained a high-risk undertaking. For instance, the director informed the Committee that the ability to achieve organizational readiness by adopting all the changes that would be needed as a result of Umoja remained a challenge. **The Committee welcomes the progress achieved in implementing Umoja and calls upon management to continue to identify and manage the key risks to the Umoja project achieving its objectives.**

E. Coordination among United Nations oversight bodies

78. During the reporting period, in addition to its regularly scheduled meetings with OIOS, the Committee met with other oversight bodies, including the Joint Inspection Unit and the Audit Operations Committee of the Board of Auditors. In separate meetings with the Board of Auditors, the Joint Inspection Unit and OIOS, the Committee took note of the positive relationship fostered through the tripartite

coordination meetings of the oversight bodies and the sharing of workplans in an effort to avoid duplication.

79. The Committee was informed that the Board of Auditors coordinated with OIOS in the planning of its audits in order to avoid duplication of efforts and to determine the extent to which the Board could rely on the work of OIOS.

80. During its twentieth session, the Committee and the Board of Auditors continued to exchange experiences and discussed ways to enhance cóoperation and effectiveness without prejudice to their respective mandates. The Committee and the Board also engaged in extensive discussions on the Board's findings on operational implications of the trends in the financial statements and the steps the Board in particular, and the Panel of External Auditors in general, were taking to analyse such trends.

81. The dialogue between the Board and the Committee allowed for the sharing of perspectives on matters of mutual concern and provided a usefu! opportunity for cooperation among United Nations oversight bodies.

F. Cooperation and access

82. The Independent Audit Advisory Committee is pleased to report that it has received the full cooperation of the Joint Inspection Unit, the Board of Auditors, the Office of Internal Oversight Services and senior management in the Secretariat, including the Department of Management, in discharging its responsibilities. The Committee was also given appropriate access to the staff, documents and information it needed to undertake its work. Th< Committee looks forward to continued cooperation with the entities with which it interacts in order to discharge its responsibilities, as set out in its terms of reference, in a timely manner.

IV. Conclusion

83. Within the context of its terms of reference, the Independent Audit Advisory Committee presents the above observations, comments and recommendations, as contained in paragraphs 16, 19, 22, 24, 27, 29, 33, 38, 41, 42, 45, 50, 54, 56, 58, 61, 63, 65, 68, 71, 76 and 77, for the consideration of the General Assembly.

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Sixty-eighth session
Item 65 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Promotion and protection of the rights of children: promotion and protection of the rights of children

Annual report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children

Summary

The present annual report builds upon the recommendation of the General Assembly in its resolution 67/152 that the Secretary-General extend the mandate of the Special Representative for a further period of three years and takes into account the request of the Assembly that the Special Representative continue to submit annual reports to the Assembly and the Human Rights Council on the activities undertaken in the fulfilment of her mandate, including information on her field visits and on the progress achieved and the challenges remaining on the violence against children agenda.

* A/68/150.

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I. Mandate and strategic priorities

1. The mandate of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children was established by the General Assembly in its resolution 62/141. The Special Representative assumed her position in September 2009 (as noted in document A/HRC/13/46).

2. In its resolution 67/152 of 20 December 2012, the General Assembly recommended that the Secretary-General extend the mandate of the Special Representative for a further period of three years, and decided that for the effective performance of the mandate and the sustainability of its core activities, the mandate should be funded from the regular budget starting from the biennium 2014-2015.

3. The present report marks the start of a new phase. It builds upon progress achieved and lessons learned in the first three years in advancing implementation of the strategic recommendations of the United Nations study on violence against children (hereinafter referred to as "the study") (see A/61/299 and A/62/209); and it takes into account the priorities identified by the Special Representative for the second term of her mandate (see A/67/230, paras. 100-110). These include mainstreaming the recommendations of the study in the national policy agenda; addressing emerging concerns; tackling violence across children's life cycles, with priority attention to the most vulnerable children; and promoting children's protection from violence as a priority in the development agenda (see box I).

Box I
Role of the Special Representative

The Special Representative is a high-profile global independent advocate for the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence against children, acting as a bridge-builder and a catalyst for action across sectors and settings where violence against children may occur. She promotes the protection of children from violence as a human rights imperative, making use of mutually supportive strategies, including advocacy; the promotion of international, regional and national consultations to advance progress, identify good practices and promote cross-fertilization of experience; the hosting of expert consultations; the development of thematic studies and information materials; and the organization of field missions. In promoting progress in the implementation of the recommendations of the United Nations study on violence against children, the Special Representative has placed a particular emphasis on those with a time-bound target, namely:

(a) The development in each State of a national comprehensive strategy to prevent and respond to all forms of violence;

(b) The introduction of an explicit legal ban on all forms of violence against children, in all settings;

(c) The consolidation of data and research on violence against children.

II. Consolidating progress in the implementation of the recommendations of the United Nations study on violence against children

4. This report reviews major developments in sustaining and scaling up efforts to protect children from violence. It builds upon the progress made in implementation of the recommendations of the study and takes into account the global survey on violence against children, conducted by the Special Representative in collaboration with a wide range of partners. The preliminary results of the global survey were highlighted in the 2012 Special Representative's report to the General Assembly (A/67/230, paras. 50-99) and are addressed in greater detail in a separate publication.

5. The findings indicate a promising process of change. There is ever-growing ratification of treaties on children's protection; violence against children is gaining visibility in national agendas, with increasing legislative action, policy interventions and information campaigns to safeguard children's freedom from violence; and promising initiatives help to capture the magnitude and incidence of this phenomenon and its impact on children's daily lives and enhance participation of children in advocacy and decision-making processes.

6. At the same time, progress remains uneven and more vigorous efforts are needed to develop a national cohesive and well-resourced strategy on violence against children; to promote coordinated policy interventions and overcome the dispersion and poor enforcement of pieces of legislation; to consolidate data and research; and enhance investment in family support, capacity-building of professionals and safe and child-sensitive mechanisms.

7. The urgency of protecting children from violence has clearly not diminished. Indeed, the magnitude and impact of this phenomenon remain high level and deeply distressing. For countless children, life is defined by one word: fear. In their early years and throughout adolescence, children endure violent disciplinary practices in schools, in care and justice institutions and within the home. Armed and community violence undermines their daily life and development; millions of children experience violence in work settings, including domestic work; trafficking is on the increase; in some countries, inhuman sentencing is still imposed on boys and girls; and harmful practices persist, with long-lasting consequences for children's rights.

8. Violence and deprivation are strongly interconnected and pave the way towards high risk of poor health, poor school performance and long-term welfare dependency. But beyond the cost to each individual victim, violence has serious costs for households, communities and national economies.

9. As noted in paragraph 91 of the report to the Secretary-General on the United Nations System Task Team on the Post-2015 United Nations Development Agenda, entitled "Realizing the future we want for all":[1]

> The prevention and reduction of all forms of violence and abuse — and protection against their specific manifestations, including trafficking in human beings, torture, organized crime, the press-ganging of children, drug-related criminality, sexual abuse and labour exploitation — should be at the heart of any agenda which fully recognizes the centrality of human security, both as a human rights imperative and as integral to development.

[1] Available from http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/Post_2015_UNTTreport.pdf.

Similarly the Secretary-General's High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda in its report[2] recognizes freedom from violence as a fundamental human right, and the essential foundation for building peaceful and prosperous societies, and calls for the elimination of all forms of violence against children.

10. Capitalizing on the increasing international attention given to this topic and the momentum generated by the recommendations of the study, over the reporting period, the Special Representative undertook significant initiatives to rally firm support and step up progress in children's protection from violence. First, as reflected in section II.A below, she undertook significant efforts to mainstream the protection of children from violence in the policy agenda, including through the promotion of ratification and implementation of international standards. Second, as highlighted in section II.B, the Special Representative pursued initiatives to enhance awareness and consolidate knowledge on violence prevention and responses, through the organization of expert consultations and the development of thematic studies. Third, as presented in section II.C, significant developments were promoted to reinforce institutional collaboration with regional organizations and institutions; and, finally, as discussed in section II.D, strategic alliances were further strengthened within and beyond the United Nations system to accelerate progress in ensuring children's protection from violence.

11. Since the start of the mandate, to support national initiatives and bring it closer to national stakeholders and the public at large, the Special Representative conducted over 90 missions in more than 50 countries in all regions. Country visits provided a valuable opportunity to advance implementation of the recommendations of the study and address a wide range of concerns through (a) high-level policy discussions with national authorities, (b) awareness-raising and advocacy initiatives with professional groups, civil society partners and children and young people and (c) media encounters. The visits have helped to promote acceleration of progress in the universal ratification of human rights treaties, the enactment and enforcement of legislation designed to ban all forms of violence and safeguard the protection of child victims, and the consolidation of data and research to be used to inform policymaking, as well as initiatives to prevent children's exposure to violence in the home, in schools and in care and justice institutions, or as associated with harmful practices and community violence.

A. Widening the human rights foundation for children's freedom from violence

United Nations campaign for the universal ratification of the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child

12. Children's freedom from violence is a fundamental human right recognized by the Convention on the Rights of the Child[3] and the Optional Protocols thereto,[4] and addressed by other important international standards. The ratification and effective

[2] Available from http://www.post2015hlp.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/UN-Report.pdf. See annex II, goal 11, at p. 52.

[3] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1577, No. 27531.

[4] Ibid., vols. 2171 and 2173, No. 27531, and General Assembly resolution 66/138, annex.

implementation of these treaties constitute a crucial step towards promoting prevention and elimination of violence and protecting children from violence.

13. The United Nations campaign for the universal ratification of the Optional Protocols is a major initiative in this area. Launched in May 2010 by the Secretary-General, the campaign is supported by the Special Representative, together with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

14. The goal of universal ratification has been widely endorsed by Member States, national institutions and civil society partners, as well as regional organizations. For example, the Council of Europe launched a campaign to stop sexual violence against children, featuring the ratification of the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography[5] as a core component.

15. Since the launch of the campaign, the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography[5] received 26 additional ratifications and is currently in force in 163 countries. Of the 30 States that are not yet parties to the Protocol, the majority made formal commitments to ratification in the framework of the universal periodic review process of the Human Rights Council, the Committee on the Rights of the Child or other human rights mechanisms; and the large majority have ratified the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementary to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime,[6] and Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182),[7] of the International Labour Organization, which address similar areas of concern.

16. The campaign will continue to build on the momentum created to reach universal ratification. The 2013 United Nations Treaty Event, organized in conjunction with the high-level segment of the General Assembly, marks a critical stage in this process, with its prominent attention to the rights of the child.

17. The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure[8] is another important legal instrument promoted by the Special Representative. The Protocol was adopted by the General Assembly on 19 December 2011 and as of 26 July 2013, it had been ratified by 6 States and signed by 37.

18. The Protocol recognizes children's legal standing with respect to seeking redress for the violation of their rights — either directly or through a representative. To promote its implementation, domestic remedies and child-sensitive procedures and mechanisms need to be in place, including ombuds for children or similar national independent human rights institutions. Similarly, child-sensitive procedures and legal safeguards need to be established to ensure respect for the best interests and the views of the child, to protect children's privacy and prevent the risk of ill-treatment or intimidation.

[5] Ibid., vol. 2171, No. 27531.

[6] Ibid., vol. 2237, No. 39574. Adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 55/25.

[7] Ibid., vol. 2133, No. 37245.

[8] General Assembly resolution 66/138, annex.

19. Widespread public information, awareness-raising and education campaigns and capacity-building of professionals working with and for children are crucial to making the provisions of the Protocol widely known and facilitating access to relevant information by all those concerned, including children.

20. To support children's understanding of the Protocols, the Special Representative, in cooperation with partners, is preparing child-friendly versions of these treaties, utilizing simple concepts and information to enable children to make use of their provisions in a safe and effective manner.

21. The Special Representative promotes the swift ratification and implementation of these Protocols at the global, regional and national levels. In November 2012, she joined in the organization of regional meetings on the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure: the first was hosted in Ankara by the Government of Turkey, in cooperation with the Council of Europe and UNICEF; and the second was held in Cairo and organized by the League of Arab States.

22. These regional meetings constitute a strategic platform for mobilizing support for ratification and implementation, aligning national legislation with the provisions of the Protocol and providing for child-sensitive procedures for counselling, reporting and complaints, which can be safely used by children without any risk of violence or manipulation.

Protecting children from trafficking

23. As noted in paragraph 79 of one part of the study (see A/61/299), trafficking is associated with different forms of violence: abduction or deception by recruiters, sexual violence perpetuated as the victims are transferred to their destination, and being held captive, frequently accompanied by violence, while waiting for "job" placement. Most victims are trafficked into violent situations.

24. With this in mind, the Special Representative pursued close collaboration with United Nations and regional partners, including advocacy for the ratification and implementation of international standards. This process is supported by the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons[9] and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. By July 2013, this Protocol had been ratified by 156 countries, and more than 130 countries had legislation criminalizing trafficking. Yet, the number of convictions remains low.[10]

25. Particularly worrisome is the fact that child trafficking has been on the increase: between 2007 and 2010, 27 per cent of detected victims were children. Of every three child victims, two are girls and one is a boy[11] and, in some regions, children's exposure to this form of violence is particularly high.[12]

26. The Special Representative will continue to work with child protection partners for the ratification and strong enforcement of these standards, supporting

[9] General Assembly resolution 64/293, annex.

[10] See United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2012* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.13.IV.1), p. 7, key findings.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid. In Africa and the Middle East, approximately 68 per cent of victims were children (ibid., p. 10).

legal reform, awareness-raising and social mobilization to prevent child trafficking and safeguard the rights of child victims.

Protection from violence associated with domestic work

27. The ratification of the Decent Work for Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) of the International Labour Organization has been a core component of the Special Representative's agenda. This treaty requires States to set a minimum age for domestic work and ensure that work by young domestic workers over the minimum age does not interfere with their education; and calls for the protection of domestic workers from all forms of abuse, harassment and violence.

28. Children engaged in domestic work, most of them girls, are highly vulnerable to violence. According to ILO estimates contained in the publication *Ending Child Labour in Domestic Work and Protecting Young Workers for Abusive Working Conditions*, there may be as many as 100 million domestic workers worldwide, 15.5 million of whom are children.[13] Most of them work as housekeepers, nannies or caregivers, and many are also migrants who hope to support their families through their remittances. Often isolated, with no formal protection structure, child domestic workers are highly vulnerable to labour exploitation, through having to work long hours without rest, being denied holidays or being deprived of wages, as well as to serious manifestations of violence and abuse.

29. In the same publication, ILO expresses special concern at the largely hidden nature of domestic work and its strong association with incidents of violence. Name-calling, threats, shouting and screaming, beating, kicking, whipping, scalding, overwork and denial of food, and sexual harassment and abuse are some of the incidents acknowledged in the report. If they become pregnant, girls may be dismissed and find themselves on the streets, afraid to return home.[14]

30. The Special Representative will continue to join hands with partners for the swift ratification and implementation of ILO standards, for legal reform and for the consolidation of data and research on child workers' exposure to violence. The third Global Conference on Child Labour, to be held in Brasilia in October 2013, will provide a significant platform for advancing this cause.

Protecting children from enforced disappearances

31. The protection of children from enforced disappearances has gained renewed attention in 2013 with the adoption of the general comment on children and enforced disappearances by the Human Rights Council Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances at its ninety-eighth session, held from 31 October to 9 November 2012 (A/HRC/WGEID/98/1 and Corr.1). The general comment is the fruit of close collaboration between the Working Group and the Special Representative. It recognizes enforced disappearances of children as an extreme form of violence, preventable in all of its forms and unjustifiable under any circumstance.

[13] See International Labour Organization, International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), *Ending Child Labour in Domestic Work and Protecting Young Workers from Abusive Working Conditions* (Geneva, International Labour Organization, 2013).

[14] Ibid., pp. 34-37.

32. Child victims may be personally subject to enforced disappearance or may be born in captivity of a mother subject to enforced disappearance or victimized as a result of the fact that one of their parents, relatives or legal guardians are subject to this human rights violation. Children living and/or working on the street or placed in institutions may also be at special risk.

33. The prevention of enforced disappearances is closely dependent on the effective enforcement of international standards on the administration of justice, including those prohibiting children's unlawful or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, securing children's prompt access to legal aid and appropriate assistance, providing measures that are alternatives to deprivation of liberty, and safeguarding the right to challenge the legality of a child's detention. Deprivation of liberty should occur only in officially recognized places of detention, where the registration of children is secured, duly updated and effectively monitored by relevant oversight mechanisms and independent supervision.

34. The protection of children from enforced disappearances is a concern that was raised by the Special Representative in her field visits. To prevent and address this serious form of violence, it is critical to promote child-sensitive truth-seeking and redress measures, as well as comprehensive psychological care and support for the long-lasting reintegration of child victims. Moreover, child-friendly procedures need to be in place to secure children's genuine participation in proceedings, to support the child with information that he or she can fully understand and to prevent the risk of revictimization.

B. Enhancing awareness and consolidating knowledge

35. The organization of expert consultations and the development of thematic studies, key features in the agenda of the Special Representative, are designed to widen support for children's protection from violence; generate concern about the harmful effects of this phenomenon; promote behavioural and societal change; and ensure that progress is achieved in implementing the study's recommendations.

36. Eight expert consultations have been held so far.[15] Gathering leading experts from within and beyond the United Nations system, and building upon sound research and strategic experiences in different regions, they have helped to enhance understanding of the root causes of and risk factors for violence, identify good practices, and enable the presentation of policy recommendations to assist Governments in their national implementation efforts.

37. In this regard, the Special Representative issued several thematic reports:[16] on safe and child-sensitive counselling, reporting and complaint mechanisms for addressing violence against children; tackling violence in schools; protecting children from harmful practices in plural legal systems; and preventing and responding to violence against children within the juvenile justice system. A new report on restorative justice for children is forthcoming.

[15] Further information on the eight expert consultations organized by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General is available from http://srsg.violenceagainstchildren.org/knowledge.

[16] Available from http://srsg.violenceagainstchildren.org/publications.

38. These studies have triggered important policy developments at the international, regional and national levels. The study on child-sensitive mechanisms has become an influential reference point in respect of support for the implementation of the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure. The report tackling violence in schools has generated significant policy discussions at the regional and national levels, most recently following the launch of its Spanish-language version during the Special Representative's visit to El Salvador.

39. The study on harmful practices was released to mark the first anniversary of the International Day of the Girl Child, observed on 11 October 2012. Jointly developed with Plan International, in cooperation with the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the African Union, it served as a reference with a sound perspective during the 2013 celebration of the Day of the African Child, devoted to the theme: "Eliminating harmful social and cultural practices affecting children: our collective responsibility". The study will frame additional regional initiatives to support the abandonment of harmful practices, including the consultation organized with the South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children (SAIEVAC) (an apex body of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)) in September 2013 in Bhutan.

40. The joint report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Special Representative on prevention of and responses to violence against children within the juvenile justice system was launched with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Governments of Austria and Thailand during the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly. These partners also participated in the presentation of the study to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in April 2013. As a follow-up, the Commission called for an open-ended intergovernmental expert group to develop model strategies and practical measures on the elimination of violence against children in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice. The expert meeting will be hosted by the Government of Thailand.[17]

41. As addressed below, during the reporting period, the Special Representative convened two important expert meetings, on violence in early childhood; and restorative justice for children. Preparatory work was also initiated on the protection of children from gang and armed violence, and on opportunities and risks associated with the use of information and communications technologies, to be addressed by upcoming expert consultations.

1. Prevention and elimination of violence in early childhood

42. The study called for the protection from violence of children in their early years, and recognized the crucial importance of positive parenting, home visitation, and early childhood care and development programmes (see box II).

43. Early childhood is a fundamental stage in children's development, and offers a strategic opportunity to prevent violence and break the cycle of abuse affecting children. In early years, incidents of violence often occur in the privacy of the

[17] See the report of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice on the twenty-second session (*Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2013, Supplement No. 10* and corrigendum) (E/2013/30 and Corr.1).

household and may have an irreversible effect on children's development and future life; and it is particularly hard for very young victims to expose these situations or seek help. These risks are heightened when children are placed in residential care.

Box II
UNICEF call to action: ending the placement of children under 3 in institutions[a]

UNICEF urged Governments in the Central and Eastern Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean regions to prevent the separation of children under age 3 from their families and to end children's placement in institutional care.

The call to action is framed by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children.[b] It recognizes that placement in residential care has a detrimental impact on the health, physical and cognitive development and emotional security of very young people; and recommends five core interventions:

- Legislative changes and strict conditions for placement in institutional care, which should be a last resort.
- Allocation of resources to support vulnerable families and promote family-based services to prevent the separation from their families of children under age 3, and provide special attention to children with disabilities.
- Capacity-building and standards of practice for child protection actors involved with children at risk of being deprived of their families.
- Information and sensitization campaigns to promote social inclusion of children deprived of parental care and children with disabilities.
- Mechanisms for monitoring the conditions of, and responses to, children deprived of family care.

[a] Issued by the UNICEF Regional Offices for Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia and for Latin America and the Caribbean.
[b] General Assembly resolution 64/142, annex.

44. Significant research highlights the serious impact of violence on young children, including on their brain development. There is also sound evidence on the valuable contribution of early childhood initiatives to the prevention of violence, as well as to the reduction of inequalities and the prevention of discrimination and social exclusion.

45. To capitalize on this potential, in late 2012, the Special Representative convened an expert consultation in cooperation with the Government of Peru, the Bernard van Leer Foundation, UNICEF and the Global Movement for Children in Latin America and the Caribbean. The meeting included the participation of a cross-regional group of experts, including young people, and highlighted the urgency of:

- Promoting strong political engagement to prevent and reduce violence in the life of young children, supported by a national strategy and by public policies well coordinated across governmental departments and between central and decentralized authorities. Countries should designate a high-level government institution, well versed in early childhood concerns, as responsible for the prevention of and response to violence against children and with the capacity to involve multiple sectors, and secure adequate funding and effective monitoring and evaluation of results and impact.
- Strengthening the legal protection of young children from violence through a comprehensive legal ban on all forms of violence in all settings, and measures to ensure redress, recovery and reintegration of child victims and fight impunity.
- Ensuring gender-sensitive approaches and child-sensitive support to young children through well-resourced institutions and services and well-trained professionals, taking into account children's perceptions and experiences.
- Supporting families and caregivers in their child-rearing responsibilities and securing a responsive national child protection system to strengthen families' capacity to raise young children in safe environments and prevent child abandonment and placement in residential care, with special attention to young children at risk.
- Consolidating data and research to measure progress in young children's exposure to violence, supported by funding for impact evaluations of relevant programmes.
- Raising the profile of early childhood initiatives in the policy agenda and in the public debate and widening awareness about the high return of investment in early childhood initiatives and the social cost of inaction; and promoting a change in attitudes and behaviour that condone violence against young children, including when pursued in the form of discipline or education or in other harmful forms.
- Enhancing international, regional and bilateral cooperation to promote cross-fertilization of experiences, address persistent challenges and mobilize vigorous support for young children's protection from violence.

2. Promoting restorative justice for children

46. In June 2013, the Special Representative joined the Governments of Indonesia and Norway in the organization of an expert consultation on restorative justice for children.

47. The meeting, held in Bali, reviewed different models of restorative justice for children, as well as national legislation and experiences, including those promoted in Australia, Brazil, Indonesia, Northern Ireland, Norway, Peru, the Philippines, South Africa and Thailand (see box III).

48. The primary purpose of restorative justice is just that — to restore justice. Within families, schools, communities, organizations, civil society and the State, it provides peaceful conflict resolution and contributes to democratic peaceful societies. Restorative justice can take many forms, including mediation,

conciliation, conferencing and sentencing circles. Common to all approaches is the focus on healing, respect and strengthened relationships.

49. In the context of the criminal justice system, child-sensitive restorative justice may involve bringing together the victim, the offender, his or her parents or guardians, child protection and justice actors, and the community, in a safe and structured environment. Through a non-adversarial and voluntary process, based on dialogue, negotiation and problem-solving, restorative justice aims to rehabilitate and reintegrate the young offender, through helping to reconnect him or her with the community, and ensuring that the offender understands the harm caused to the victim and the community and acknowledges accountability for criminal behaviour and reparation of its consequences.

50. Restorative justice promotes a paradigm shift: rather than assess how much punishment is inflicted, it measures how much harm is repaired or how much recurrence of violence is prevented through an effective process of reintegration of young offenders into society.

51. This process is framed by significant international standards on the protection of the rights of children involved with the criminal justice system.[18] The Convention on the Rights of the Child, recognizes the right of every child alleged as, accused of, or recognized as having infringed the penal law to be treated in a manner consistent with the promotion of the child's sense of dignity and worth so as to reinforce the child's respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of others, taking into account the age of the child and the desirability of promoting his or her social reintegration, and his or her assumption of a constructive role in society (article 40 (1)). The Convention encourages the establishment of a separate justice system specifically applicable to children (article 40 (3)); anticipates measures to deal with the child without resorting to judicial proceedings, provided that human rights and legal safeguards are fully respected (article 40 (3) (b)); and foresees a variety of dispositions to ensure that children are dealt with in a manner appropriate to their well-being, and proportionate both to their circumstances and to the offence (article 40 (4)).

52. The Economic and Social Council adopted basic principles on the use of restorative justice, encouraging the development of mediation, conciliation, conferencing and sentencing circles as an effective alternative to formal criminal justice mechanisms.[19]

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[18] These include the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (the Beijing Rules) (General Assembly resolution 40/33, annex); the United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (the Riyadh Guidelines) (Assembly resolution 45/112, annex); Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty (Assembly resolution 45/113, annex); and the Guidelines for Action on Children in the Criminal Justice System (Economic and Social Council resolution 1997/30, annex).

[19] See, for example, Economic and Social Council resolution 1999/26 of 28 July 1999 on the development and implementation of mediation and restorative justice measures in criminal justice; Council resolution 1998/23 of 28 July 1998 on international cooperation aimed at the reduction of prison overcrowding and the promotion of alternative sentencing; and Council resolution 1997/33 of 21 July 1997 on elements of responsible crime prevention: standards and norms.

Box III

A new paradigm and a new mindset: Indonesia adopts new legislation on restorative justice[a]

- The law is framed by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and addresses children as offenders, as victims and as witnesses of crimes.
- Status offences are decriminalized.
- The minimum age of criminal responsibility is raised from 8 to 12 and marital status no longer constitutes grounds for treating the child as an adult.
- Children's right to legal counsel and other assistance and to access justice before an objective and impartial court and in closed proceedings is recognized, as is the right to humane treatment and freedom from torture and other inhuman, cruel and degrading treatment or punishment.
- Protection of privacy and confidentiality of the child's identity in public media is guaranteed.
- Arrest, detention or imprisonment can be used only as a last resort and for the shortest possible time.
- Only specialized personnel can handle cases of children involved with the justice system.
- Police, prosecutors and judges are required to prioritize diversion and restorative justice in cases of an offence punishable with a sentence of imprisonment of up to a maximum of seven years and when the child is not a recidivist.
- Legislation provides a variety of sentencing options, including admonishment, non-institutional and institutional treatment, social services, supervision and vocational training.

[a] Law No. 11/2012 will enter into force in 2014.

53. The Bali meeting adopted important policy recommendations, highlighting the following areas:

Legislation

- States should undertake a comprehensive legislative review to align relevant domestic legislation, whether in statutory, customary or religious laws, with human rights standards; in countries with plural legal systems, the supremacy of legislation aligned with international human rights standards should be explicitly recognized in the law to avert potential conflicts in legal interpretation and implementation.
- Legislation should decriminalize status offences and survival behaviours and include legal safeguards to protect the child's best interests, and the child's

right to freedom from violence and discrimination, to free and safe participation in proceedings throughout the restorative justice process, and to legal and other relevant assistance.

- Legislation should provide law enforcement, prosecutors and the judiciary with options for diverting children away from the criminal justice system and promoting restorative justice processes at all stages of the proceedings; it should include alternative and educative measures such as warning, probation, judicial supervision and community work, to be applied in combination with restorative justice processes or when restorative justice is not appropriate. Children's right to recovery, rehabilitation and reintegration should be firmly expressed in legislation.

- Legislation should recognize that restorative justice and informal justice or conflict resolution mechanisms, while being accessible at the local and community levels and playing an important role in the protection and reintegration of children, should never jeopardize children's rights or preclude children from accessing the formal justice system.

Training and guidance

- Effective training should be assured to all relevant law enforcement and justice actors, including the police, prosecutors, the judiciary, probation officers, lawyers, social workers, facilitators and mediators. It should provide skills to promote dialogue, manage emotions and conflict, and secure safety of child participants; and address child rights and relevant legislation, as well as diversion, restorative justice processes and other alternative non-custodial measures. Guidelines and standard operational procedures should be developed for professionals involved in this process.

Coordination, adequate resources, data and research

- Coordination between restorative justice service providers and justice actors should be institutionalized at the national and local levels, and close cooperation should be encouraged between relevant stakeholders. Availability of a sufficient number of well-trained professionals in the area of restorative justice should be secured. Data, research and evaluation of restorative justice programmes for children should be promoted as a critical dimension of this process to safeguard the best interests of the child at all times, promote the child's reintegration and prevent violence and recidivism.

Awareness-raising and social mobilization

- Awareness-raising campaigns should be undertaken at the national and local levels with relevant stakeholders, including traditional and religious leaders and the media, to enhance understanding of restorative justice and promote child-friendly attitudes among justice professionals and service providers, and to sensitize the general public to the importance of restorative justice processes.

- The role of civil society organizations in the implementation of restorative justice programmes should be promoted; furthermore, mapping and mobilizing

local resources and community volunteers should be encouraged for successful implementation at the community level.

3. Protecting children affected by armed and gang violence

54. The protection of children from the impact of armed and gang violence is another priority for the second term of the Special Representative's mandate. In cooperation with strategic partners, including the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and UNICEF, research work has been advanced in anticipation of an expert consultation in 2014.

55. Incidents of violence in the community, violence associated with criminal activities and violence occurring in the privacy of the home often become deeply interconnected. They cause fear, insecurity and harm to families, communities and society in general. Children are hard hit, both as victims and as witnesses.

56. Adolescent boys are at high risk of homicide as a result of participation in violence-prone activities, such as street fighting, street crime, gang membership and possession of weapons. For girls, the incidence of inter-partner violence is particularly high, and in many nations, family-related homicide is the major cause of female deaths.

57. Violence associated with gang violence, including extortion, physical violence, homicides and disappearances, dramatically hamper childhood and adolescent development. It compromises access to education and health services, recreation and social support, and is associated with lower levels of school enrolment and retention, and higher levels of poverty. In turn, deprivation aggravates the risk of increased levels of domestic violence and children's vulnerability.

58. Those belonging to the poorest sectors or coming from regions where gang activity is prevalent end up being stigmatized and perceived as delinquents, with enhanced risk of criminalization, and limited options for protection and genuine reintegration.

59. This situation is at times aggravated by the impact of migration. As highlighted during the Special Representative's visit to El Salvador, in June 2013, 40 per cent of Salvadoran children live with only one or even without any parent, as a result of migration or abandonment by their family. In many cases, deprivation is the norm at home, with one in every two children living in poverty, and with limited access to social services of quality to prevent and respond to violence.

60. Children from disadvantaged communities are attractive targets for organized criminal activities. Through coercion, social pressure or the promise of financial reward, they are at risk of being recruited or manipulated to hold or deliver drugs or weapons, to carry out petty crime, to beg on the streets or to become involved in other exploitative activities.

61. Public fear of gang violence and youth crime has generated social pressure for the criminalization of children and adolescents, lower minimum ages of criminal responsibility and longer sentences of imprisonment. This has been accompanied by media stigmatization of children from disadvantaged groups and a culture of tolerance of violence against them. In this process, poor rule of law and weak law enforcement performance, together with public fear of retaliation, lead to sporadic convictions and a deep sense of impunity.

62. These various concerns were given special attention in the field visits conducted by the Special Representative and will continue to be addressed in 2014.

4. Opportunities and risks associated with the use of new information and communications technologies

63. Information and communications technologies have developed at an increasingly rapid rate over the past two decades. They have brought with them enormous benefits and opportunities in terms of education, socialization and entertainment. Children and adolescents master these new technologies with ease and expertise, exploring opportunities for accessing information. Such technologies support decision-making, promote creativity and innovation and enhance social networks.

64. Yet, these technologies also generate new risks and can become a tool with which to perpetrate violence. Indeed, harmful information becomes available more easily and may also be spread more quickly, potentially reaching out to millions in a fraction of a second and remaining in cyberspace for a lifetime. As a result, children may be at risk of abuse, bullying, harassment and exploitation in ways that are often difficult to detect and address, including by parents, caregivers, teachers and others (see box IV).

Box IV

EU Kids Online:[a] In their own words: what bothers children online?

According to EU Kids Online research released in 2013, pornography (22 per cent) and violent content (18 per cent) top children's online concerns. Children reveal shock, fear and disgust on seeing cruelty, killings and abuse; since much is real rather than fictional violence, this adds to the depth of children's reaction. Boys appear more bothered by violent content, including violence, aggression and gory content, while girls fear more contact-related risks. While younger children are more concerned about violent content, concerns about bullying and unwanted sharing of information, images or photos increase with age, and they are linked in children's minds to the use of social networking sites.

[a] EU Kids Online is a thematic network that promotes research on understanding children's online experiences. See http://www.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/EUKidsOnline/EU%20Kids%20III/Reports/Intheirownwords020213.pdf.

65. In order to build on the growing body of knowledge and experience, and to accelerate progress in ensuring children's online protection from violence, over the next several months, the Special Representative will organize with strategic partners a consultation on information and communications technology and children's protection from violence. The consultation will provide a strategic platform for learning from and building upon initiatives undertaken by national Governments, United Nations organizations, international and regional organizations, academia, independent children's rights institutions, the private sector and civil society organizations, including children and young people.

66. Child online protection and cybersecurity also constitute a priority topic to be addressed by the Special Representative at the Global Youth Summit, to be hosted in September 2013 by the Government of Costa Rica, in cooperation with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). Young people will be closely associated with this initiative, both by attending in person and by joining the interactive discussions through online webcast and social media channels. Building upon the outcomes of the summit, ITU plans to review its Guidelines for Industry on Child Online Protection and launch a global campaign to raise awareness among young people on how to manage their online information.

C. Reinforcing regional processes in support of national implementation efforts

67. The strengthening of collaboration with regional organizations and institutions has been a cornerstone of the Special Representative's strategy to accelerate progress in the implementation of the study recommendations. These critical partnerships have helped in maximizing the engagement with Governments and in developing policy platforms to promote cross-fertilization of experiences, sustaining and further consolidating national action for children's protection from violence, and mobilizing support for overcoming persisting challenges and the steady pursuit of the implementation of this critical agenda.

68. This process has led to significant results:[20]

- First, the hosting of high-level regional consultations to review progress in the implementation of the study recommendations.
- Second, the adoption of regional political declarations and agendas for action tailored to the specific reality of each region and designed to achieve concrete goals in the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence against children.
- Third, the development of comprehensive regional studies to take stock of laws, policies and institutions safeguarding children from violence and identifying gaps and opportunities for accelerated progress. "The Comparative Arab Report on implementing the recommendations of the United Nations Secretary-General's study on violence against children" and the regional mappings conducted in South and Central America are sound outcomes of this process. As noted below, in 2013, a new study was issued on the process in the Caribbean.[21]
- These strategic partnerships opened up avenues for strengthening cross-regional cooperation, including South-South cooperation. In this regard, in 2011 and 2012, the Special Representative hosted two high-level round tables

[20] Regional partnerships include the League of Arab States, the South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children (SAIEVAC)/SAARC, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) through its Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), MERCOSUR, Central American countries (Costa Rica, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and the Dominican Republic), the Council of Europe and the European Union, as well as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

[21] See http://srsg.violenceagainstchildren.org/event/2012-05-14_457.

with regional organizations and institutions, on the occasion of the General Assembly debate on the rights of the child. One tangible outcome of this process was the development of an information hub to support knowledge-sharing and access to information on the follow-up to the study.

69. Over the reporting period, additional developments helped to further strengthen the collaboration with regional organizations.

Central American Integration System

70. In June 2013, the Special Representative held a high-level meeting with the Central American Integration System (SICA), to discuss strategic areas of cooperation on children's protection from violence, and to promote the mainstreaming of this concern in the SICA agenda. The meeting was provided with information from the regional road map on violence against children for the Central American region, adopted in December 2012, in Santo Domingo.

71. SICA and the Special Representative agreed to enhance collaboration on the promotion of the rule of law, restorative justice programmes, and public policies for violence prevention; and to enhance cooperation on early childhood initiatives, including in the framework of the Regional Conference for the Prevention of Violence Starting in Early Childhood (Panama, August 2013).

Caribbean Community

72. As a follow-up to the 2012 regional consultation on violence against children, hosted by the Government of Jamaica in cooperation with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Special Representative,[21] a regional study was released in 2013 on the process of implementation of policies in the Caribbean.

73. In this connection, CARICOM established a task force for child protection and child rights to accelerate progress in children's protection from violence. The Task Force, composed of the CARICOM secretariat, UNICEF and civil society partners, as well as the Special Representative, adopted a plan of action for 2013-2014 aimed at the protection of children against violence, abuse, exploitation, child labour, discrimination and neglect in CARICOM members and associated members. The plan of action mainstreams the implementation of the study recommendations and the road map on violence against children, adopted by the 2012 regional consultation. Strategic goals include the ratification of the three Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the adoption of an explicit legal prohibition of all forms of violence against children; the promotion of a comprehensive plan to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence; the consolidation of national data and research; and the establishment of a specialized juvenile justice system to strengthen children's protection from violence and ensure their reintegration in society.

74. The Bridgetown Declaration and Agenda for Action to Combat Child Sexual Abuse in the Caribbean,[22] adopted in Barbados on 21 November 2012, was another important initiative in the region. The Declaration reaffirms the commitment of Governments and civil society organizations to end child sexual abuse, and sets an

[22] See http://srsg.violenceagainstchildren.org/document/_668.

agenda for action to achieve progress, including through the ratification of the Optional Protocols and initiatives to promote a culture of zero tolerance of violence.

Inter-American Commission on Human Rights

75. In June 2013, the Special Representative and the Rapporteur on the Rights of the Child of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights met in Washington, D.C., to enhance their collaboration. They agreed to further strengthen their cooperation on children's protection from violence, including through joint advocacy and awareness-raising and the development of thematic reports, including on the right of the child to a family environment, and the impact of organized armed violence on children.

South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children (SAIEVAC)

76. Important initiatives have been promoted in the framework of cooperation with SAIEVAC/SAARC member States, including a regional meeting on the elimination of harmful practices affecting children, held in Bhutan, in September 2013; and a course on "the Convention on the Rights of the Child and International Labour Organization child labour conventions: towards greater coherence in reporting and action", held in Turin, Italy, in June 2013, and jointly promoted by the Special Representative, SAIEVAC and the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization.

77. This capacity-building programme addressed international human rights and labour standards on children's protection from violence in the framework of the SAIEVAC workplan for 2010-2015. With the participation of government officials of South Asia, representatives from civil society and workers' and employers' organizations, the meeting shared experiences of model interventions for addressing child labour and enhancing protection from violence, and explored opportunities to promote synergies among monitoring, reporting and planning mechanisms at the regional and national levels. Discussions also focused on the preparation of a South Asia child labour strategy for the third Global Conference on Child Labour, to be held, as mentioned above, in Brazil in October 2013.

Council of Europe

78. The Special Representative further strengthened her cooperation with the Council of Europe. In the framework of the Council's strategy for 2012-2015, which includes the elimination of violence against children as a core component, in November 2012, she co-organized, with the Council of Europe and UNICEF, the European conference on "Stepping up progress in combating violence against children", hosted by the Turkish Government in Ankara.

79. The meeting provided a strategic occasion to take stock of the situation of violence against children in Council of Europe member States and to enhance progress in the development of integrated national strategies. The key findings from the global progress survey conducted by the Special Representative, to which 27 Council of Europe member States have contributed, constituted a key reference for this process. Important national experiences on tackling violence against children were shared, through both government and civil society initiatives, making possible a richly productive process of learning and cross-fertilization across the region.

D. Strengthening strategic alliances to accelerate progress

1. Enhancing partnerships with Governments

80. Strategic collaboration with Governments has been crucial to advancing progress in the implementation of the study recommendations across regions. Member States have been active supporters of the process of ratification of the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international standards on the protection of children from violence, and key players in the organization of regional consultations and the shaping of regional and national policy frameworks for the prevention and elimination of violence against children. As a result, children's protection from violence has gained visibility in the policy agenda and in the public debate, as highlighted directly below.

National integrated strategy

81. As noted in the Special Representative's 2012 annual report (A/67/230, paras. 50-78), countries in every region have taken steps to develop national integrated strategies to prevent and eliminate violence against children. In 2007, 47 States had established a national agenda on violence against children; currently, more than 80 have such a policy framework, either comprising specific action plans on violence, or constituting a component of broad national child protection strategies.

82. Ghana, for example, completed its national plan of action on violence against children, 2008-2012; Jamaica adopted a national plan of action for an integrated response to children and violence, 2011-2016; Lebanon finalized a national strategy to prevent and protect children from violence; and Belgium developed an action plan on child abuse, violence and mistreatment. The first national programme on child protection (2011-2015) established by Viet Nam gives priority attention to children at risk of violence, exploitation and abuse. With special emphasis on economically disadvantaged areas and those where high proportions of ethnic minorities live, the plan aims to establish child protection systems in half of the country's provinces and cities by 2015.

83. The Special Representative promotes the development of a national integrated strategy on violence against children through advocacy and policy dialogue and in her field visits. This was also a strategic goal of her visit to Norway in June 2013. The visit coincided with the parliament's review of the Government's white paper on violence in close relationships, in the course of which the Special Representative highlighted strategic areas for further action (see box V).

Box V

White paper of the Government of Norway

The white paper, developed by the Ministry of Justice in cooperation with the Ministries of Children, Equality and Integration and of Health, provides sound evidence which can inform policy action for preventing and addressing children's exposure to different and cumulative manifestations of violence: physical and emotional violence, sexual abuse, material and economic violence, and situations where children live in a violent environment.

The recommendations, unanimously adopted by the parliament, highlight in particular: the need for better cooperation and coordination between governmental agencies and levels of administration; the consolidation of data and research on children's exposure to violence, including nationwide surveys every five years and studies on the cost of violence and return of investment in prevention; the enhancement of expertise on violence among support services, including schools and health centres; the strengthening of the network and capacity of children's houses in addressing violence; and the development of a national strategy on violence and sexual abuse against children for the period 2014-2017.

Legal protection of children

84. Significant progress has also been made in legislative processes aiming at the prohibition of violence and at securing children's protection. A large majority of countries have some form of legislation on violence, either an overall prohibition, or separate pieces of legislation focusing on distinct manifestations. When the study was released, 16 nations had enacted a comprehensive prohibition on violence, including corporal punishment within the home; at present 34 countries have an all-encompassing ban on violence against children, at times enshrined in the constitution itself. This process continues to gain ground. Currently, legislative processes are under way in a number of States with which the Special Representative maintains close cooperation, including Brazil, Peru and the Philippines. These initiatives are expected to widen the number of countries with a comprehensive legal ban on violence, and help strengthen violence prevention and children's effective protection.

85. Legislative review is a high priority for the Special Representative on her field missions. The visit to Maldives in June 2013 provided a strategic occasion to advocate for the swift completion of legislative reforms under way so as to bring national legislation in conformity with international child rights treaties, especially in the area of juvenile justice, and for the introduction of a comprehensive legal prohibition of violence as a form of sentencing, as well as violence within the home, and in care and justice institutions.

2. Strengthening collaboration within the United Nations system

86. Institutional collaboration within the United Nations system, including among funds and programmes and the specialized agencies, and human rights treaty bodies and mechanisms, has been central for raising awareness and mobilizing global support for children's protection from violence, and for mainstreaming this topic within United Nations activities. With mutually supportive mandates, connecting normative and operational organizations, all partners are united, based on a common human rights perspective, in their determination to build a violence-free world.

87. The promotion of children's freedom from violence remained a priority for the Special Representative in United Nations intergovernmental forums. In 2013, she joined policy discussions in three important bodies: the Human Rights Council, at its annual day of discussion on the rights of the child, devoted to the right to health, including prevention of violence; the Commission on the Status of Women, with its important commitments to addressing violence against women and girls; and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, which called for the drafting of model strategies and practical measures on violence against children in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice. These discussions were critical to further mainstreaming children's protection from violence in the United Nations agenda.

88. Decisive steps were taken with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and other United Nations partners in support of the universal ratification of the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The special focus of the 2013 United Nations Treaty Event in the General Assembly on the rights of the child has helped to further enhance this strategic collaboration.

89. The Inter-Agency Working Group on Violence against Children has remained a crucial institutional collaboration mechanism in support of the Special Representative's mandate. The periodic meetings of the Working Group are a key forum for consultation, policy formulation and mainstreaming of violence against children within the United Nations agenda. Over the reporting period, this cooperation was of strategic relevance for the organization of the expert consultations on early childhood and on restorative justice for children.

90. The partnership with UNICEF has been further strengthened, both at Headquarters and in the field. UNICEF provided critical support to the Special Representative's field missions, the organization of regional and expert consultations, and the promotion of the global survey on violence against children.

91. In November 2012, the Special Representative participated in the UNICEF conference on "A better way to protect all children: the theory and practice of child protection systems", co-hosted with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Save the Children, and World Vision. The conference, held in New Delhi, brought together policymakers, academics and practitioners to review and consolidate lessons learned, explore new ideas and outline an agenda for the future, within which the protection of children from violence has a central place.

92. Cooperation with UNICEF was also pursued in support of the inclusion of children's protection from violence in the post-2015 global development agenda. This is a priority for the Special Representative, who further reaffirmed this critical

concern in the high-level event organized in March 2013 with the Governments of Canada, Liberia and Sweden and a network of civil society partners.

93. The protection of the rights of children with disabilities was another important area of cooperation (see box VI).

Box VI

The State of the World's Children 2013: Children with Disabilities[a]

The launch of the UNICEF 2013 report on *The State of the World's Children*, which was devoted to children with disabilities, provided a special opportunity to highlight children's vulnerability to violence. The launch of the report coincided with the Special Representative's mission to Finland in June 2013 and offered a special occasion to address this topic with UNICEF Finland and many governmental and civil society partners, as well as national human rights institutions responsible for the promotion of children's rights.

Important meetings were also held with children and young people, including the organization "Young developers". With their personal experience of child protection services, the members of the group work with local authorities to improve social services and promote children's rights. Through their active engagement in the capacity-building of staff, they advocate for a holistic approach to children's protection from violence, for better intersectoral collaboration and greater responsibility in the promotion of long-term interaction and planning with children in need of protection.

As highlighted in these meetings, children with disabilities are exposed to heightened risks of violence. Discrimination renders them disproportionately vulnerable to neglect and abuse, including sexual abuse. Moreover, stigma, marginalization, prejudices, misperceptions and invisibility of violence aggravate the chances of overlooking their positive potential. Risks are particularly serious when children with disabilities are separated from their families and placed in institutions, where they may be confronted with ill-trained staff, lack of adequate standards and weak monitoring systems.

[a] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.13.XX.1.

94. Collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, human rights treaty bodies and special procedures of the Human Rights Council continued to feature highly in the Special Representative's agenda. In this regard, the collaboration with the Committee on the Rights of the Child focused on the advancement of the global campaign for the universal ratification of the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child; follow-up to the Committee's concluding observations in the context of field visits; and support to the development and implementation of general comments, especially No. 15 (2013) on the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health; No. 16 (2013) on State obligations regarding the impact of the business

sector on children's rights; and No. 17 (2013) on the right of the child to rest, leisure, play, recreational activities, cultural life and the arts.

95. Cooperation with the International Labour Organization served to highlight violence endured by children in settings where they work, advance implementation of the road map for achieving the elimination of the worst forms of child labour by 2016, and prepare for the third Global Conference on Child Labour. While on mission in El Salvador, the Special Representative joined the Government and the International Labour Organization in commemorating the World Day against Child Labour, on 12 June, highlighting the situation of children in domestic work in the national and international context. The commemoration of the day was also promoted at an event in New York.

96. The Special Representative collaborates closely with the Secretary-General's Special Envoy on Youth and is a member of the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development. This partnership has opened up avenues for promoting the mainstreaming of freedom from violence into initiatives for adolescents, and identifying opportunities for joint actions designed to empower young people and secure their protection from violence.

97. In response to a call made by the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues for consolidation of knowledge on violence against indigenous children, the Special Representative joined hands with UNICEF, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the International Labour Organization in the development of the study entitled "Breaking the silence on violence against indigenous girls, adolescents and young women: a call to action based on an overview of existing evidence from Africa, Asia Pacific and Latin America" (May 2013).

98. The study is guided by international standards and aims to break through the invisibility of violence. Recognizing the cumulative risks of violence faced by girls, adolescents and young women as a result of the convergence of risks associated with ethnicity, gender, age, disability, lack of parental care and other factors, the study reviews positive experiences and offers comprehensive recommendations for accelerating progress and inspiring further debate and action for the protection of indigenous girls and women from violence.

3. Consolidating cooperation with civil society

99. Consolidating cooperation with civil society has been critical to advancing the implementation of the study recommendations, and to promoting the ratification of child rights treaties, consolidating regional partnerships, informing thematic expert consultations and supporting field initiatives.

100. The International NGO Council on Violence against Children has played a crucial role in mobilization efforts at the international, regional and national levels, and in advocacy for violence prevention and elimination. Strategic collaboration was further strengthened with the NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Working Group on Violence against Children, as well as with Child Helpline International and its wide cross-regional network.

101. The Special Representative pursued her collaboration with faith-based organizations to strengthen the protection of children from violence. The partnership

with the World Day of Prayer and Action for Children was further enhanced. Violence against children is the central theme for the World Day, initiated by a global movement of religious leaders and communities of all faiths and secular organizations committed to children's rights. On the anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the movement promotes initiatives around the world to prevent and eliminate violence against children. In May 2013, the Special Representative participated in the World Day Council Meeting in Coimbatore, India, which committed to expanding its advocacy and mobilization work, including by strengthening partnerships with religious communities, secular organizations, civil society and Governments; enhancing interfaith collaboration; increasing young people's participation; and improving the use of media, including traditional and social media.

4. Widening alliances with children and young people and promoting child-friendly resources

102. Children's participation was a crucial dimension in the study and remains a core component of its follow-up process. Through field visits, regional initiatives and social media, the Special Representative consults with children and benefits from their views and perspectives. Participating in regional consultations, children have contributed to the regional road maps adopted by Governments to prevent and address violence against children. They also contributed to the global survey conducted by the Special Representative.

103. The Special Representative continues to support children in making their voices heard and in influencing the process leading up to the post-2015 global development agenda.

104. Young people have also been crucial partners in the campaign for the universal ratification of the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In MERCOSUR, the June 2013 session of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and High Authorities on Human Rights included a meeting devoted to the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure, with the participation of a young Salvadoran, representing the Latin America Network of Children and Adolescents. In his address, he emphasized the crucial value of the Protocol to young people. Recognizing its special relevance for child victims of human rights violations, who desperately need to have access to justice and effective and safe remedies, he called on all States to speed up the ratification of the Protocol and to consolidate the protection of children's rights in the region.

105. The Special Representative continues to promote the access by children to information and advocacy materials which can help to prevent violence and enhance children's protection. A web tool for children and young people is under preparation for availability on the Special Representative's website, and child-friendly resources are being developed with easy and accessible information on international standards, including the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure and the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse.

III. Looking ahead

106. **This report presents an overview of strategic developments and results achieved by the Special Representative in advancing progress in the implementation of the study recommendations. Initiatives promoted over the reporting period have helped to further consolidate cross-regional commitments to children's protection from violence and strengthen advocacy, legal and policy action for violence prevention and elimination.**

107. **In line with the priorities anticipated for the second term of the mandate, enhanced efforts were promoted to anchor the study recommendations in the national policy agenda; to tackle emerging concerns, including those associated with the use of information and communications technologies; to safeguard freedom from violence in early childhood and across the child's life cycle, with priority attention to the most excluded; and to promote the inclusion of violence against children as a crucial dimension in the development agenda.**

108. **In this regard, the significant reflections of the past several months on the post-2015 agenda open up strategic avenues towards addressing violence against children as a global priority and cross-cutting concern.**

109. **The Special Representative will continue to mobilize support for these important efforts and for the identification of specific goals and indicators so as to accelerate progress in children's protection from violence. Indeed, it is high time to measure what we treasure! And if we are to succeed, it is critical that children and young people enjoy genuine participation in this process — not as accidental partners, but as real agents of change.**